RESA of AVILA

THE WOMAN

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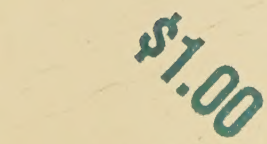

TERESA OF AVILA

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TERESA OF AVILA

THE WOMAN

A Study

By KATHERINE F. MULLANY

Author of "Miriam of Magdala," "Our Little King," "Fishers of Souls," etc., etc.

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PREFACE

A Spanish lady of Chile, South America, married an English gentleman and thereafter lived in England. A daughter was born to them and reared in a faith alien to that of her Spanish ancestors. She, in turn, married an Englishman and, in after years, visited Spain. Whilst there she was attracted to the study of St. Teresa's life by the loving devotion of the Spanish people to the great Castilian Saint. For ten years she delved into the old archives of Avila and Salamanca, critically examining the original manuscripts of Teresa and her contemporary biographers. She travelled the same roads as the Saint, in the same kind of conveyances, at the same hours of the day, at the same seasons of the year. She visited the monasteries founded by Teresa, walked through the corridors, sat at the grilles, knelt in the chapels, and looked through the windows whence the Saint gazed at the landscapes of Spain. At the end of her long research, she wrote a life of the woman she had grown to love saying: "After keen and minute ex-

amination of her life and letters, I rise from my task with my love and admiration of her increased a thousand fold from what they were when she was still to me a floating image." Later on, she says: "The mausoleum of religious literature which weighs down her memory, bears to me a strong resemblance to the pile of brick and mortar that broke in her coffin lid at Alba. From this tomb I have endeavored to disinter her with loving, reverent hands and to paint her, however feebly, as in truth and seeming, she walked in the world of men." She then proceeded to re-inter her in a new mausoleum of two large volumes, of about a thousand pages,—weighing down her memory with the stones and mortar of modern ideas, quite as completely as did the Saint's medieval biographers. It has been my joyful task to rescue Santa Teresa from this new tomb entirely freed from non-Catholic grave wrappings.

The picture presented is a literary mosaic, composed of bits of color and description taken from Mrs. Cunningham-Graham's exhaustive work, extracts from Life of St. Teresa, by Father Coleridge, S. J., selections from the Saint's own writings, and personal arrangement and limning.

The work has been laborious but delightful.

I sincerely believe that it will give to others, the same pleasure it has given me, to know Teresa of Avila, the Woman.

Before Mrs. Cunningham-Graham's death she was received into the Church. It would be strange, indeed, if the Castilian Saint had not claimed the one who had written so lovingly about her, ending as follows:

O Saint that trod'st this earth of thine,
This little spot of earth, this Avila;
All unaware these gray old walls should be the shrine,
Not only of the Ages, but of thee.
O thou that fillest this weak brain of mine
With thy great figure, small in huge immensity of Past and Present;
Stoop down from thy high pedestal and blot whatever line
May be unworthy of thyself in me.
Nay, as thou smilest on the kneeling crowd,
Who low before thee bow and sing thy praises loud,
Wilt thou not e'en vouchsafe a smile to me
Who saw thee not, yet seeks to know what thou didst not,—
What thing it was, so strong, so slight,
Which shone on thee in death, through thee in life?

K. F. M.

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TERESA OF AVILA

Chapter I

AVILA

Of all the cities that break up the monotonous surface of Castile, none impresses the imagination more profoundly than Avila. Hung between earth and sky, clustered around its old cathedral, it stands on the last spur of the Guadaramas, dominating the wildest, bleakest uplands in Castile; a city such as Van Eyck painted, or some quaint illuminator drew with minute hand on the yellowed pages of an old Missal.

Sentinel-like, bristling with defences, guarded by walls—still the most perfect in Europe and the wonder of our age—filled with the stoutest fighters of Castile, the city on its rocky heights was in the very jaws of danger. The first in battle, loyalty and chivalry, it was the privilege of "Avila of the Knights" to bear her flag in the vanguard of the Armies, which had fought for eight centuries against the Moors.

A war-like spirit, a stormy and a fighting past is impressed on every stone in the old City, and Teresa is a true daughter of such a past. She embodies all that is noblest, most representative in the Castilian character, famed for its stern self-repression, its endurance, rectitude, sobriety, dignified simplicity and austerity; its grave and stately courtesy.

The town is a labyrinth of obscure, tortuous lanes and streets, lined with gloomy houses and roundheaded or square gateways overhung by proud escutcheons. A grim old city where houses and boulders are jumbled together; the very surface of the streets being broken and pierced with rocks. Landscape, town, people and climate, are alike rigid, gray, fierce and storm tossed. Snow, hail, and storms of wind and rain, sweep over the arid plain from October to June, succeeded by a scorching period of African heat; the tender gradations of Spring and Autumn being unknown.

We would be mistaken, however, if we supposed the Avila of Teresa's day to be in any way what it is now; for in those days of pageantry and pomp, it was panoplied with color and vibrant with tinkling music, even though well acquainted with the clash of swords and the trampling of war steeds. The

nobility of Spain, although impoverished by centuries of warfare, was yet attired in aristocratic scarlet and fine linen; even though the warp and woof were threadbare and the color time subdued.

In the northeast of the City, a devious path winds over the granite-strewn waste, through thyme and rosemary, to the convent of the Encarnacion: a long, low pile of buildings about half a mile from the frowning walls. The valley between the convent and the steep, abrupt hill crowned by Gothic Avila, is broken by stone dykes and clumps of gray-stemmed trees, into laborer's plots and little patches of cultivation. To the left of the convent walls, a sudden dip of the ground conceals the poplar-lined banks of the Adija.

The site of the Encarnacion had been a Jewish burial place; close by stood their synagogue. In 1513, two years before Teresa's birth, it passed into the hands of the Carmelites. The Jewish cemetery became the convent garden, and the nuns chanted their first Office in the small, poverty-stricken chapel, on the same day that Teresa was baptised in the parish church of San Juan: April 4th, 1515.

As the sun grows low on the horizon, the landscape is filled with indefinable charm. The little houses and Romanesque towns of the

low-lying barrios beneath us whiten, flushed with wonderful gradations of color, against the darkening paramera, where glisten the windings of the stream—a strip of silver.

Sadly and slowly the deep Cathedral bell peals forth the first note of the Oraciones, and the sound is taken up and repeated from church and monastery tower. The Sierras, a purple mass—all detail blotted out—rise soft and graceful against the pale amber light of a translucent sky, as night falls over Avila—Teresa's Avila—and wraps it up in shadow.

Chapter II

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

At dawn, on the morning of March 28th, 1515, was born Teresa Cepeda y Ahumada, Spain's greatest woman.

Her parents belonged to the chivalrous and untitled gentry of Castile—though her father came of a family which claimed descent from Sanchez, one of the Kings of Castile and Arragon. His name was Alonzo Sanchez de Cepeda. He had been married twice. His first wife had two sons and one daughter. His second wife was Teresa's mother, Beatriz Davila y Ahumada, whose family was no less illustrious than his own. Thus, whenever Teresa wandered in Avila she was confronted by the emblems of her unstained and illustrious descent, for on every old keep and tower were blazoned the arms carven on her father's shield and gateway; in every church and monastery they were sculptured on the tombs of her ancestors or reflected from the

stained glass windows enveloping her in their glow.

She, too, would carry on the fighting traditions of her race; displaying the same qualities in her defense of the Carmelite Reform, and in her battles against heresy, as did her steel-clad ancestors who had helped to wrest their country, inch by inch, from the Moors. Her great dignity inspired reverence and awe, mingled with tenderest love, in all who approached her; the courteous and gracious charm of manner, which magnetised the hearts and wills of men, were but the development of the honorable instincts, the subtle hereditary influences transmitted from generation to generation of fearless progenitors, whose lives were spent in court and camp alike. Nor in all her life did she forget this appreciation of a clean descent, as her correspondence shows. In a letter to a nephew she writes of his brother's marriage to one "who, on both father's and mother's side, no one is better born;" and to another she says: "They are very much sons of some one and of clean blood."

She, however, set aside the wishes of the great nobles of Toledo, whose influence and protection meant so much to her foundation, and whose good will it was of utmost im-

portance to conciliate, and gave right of burial under the high altar of her convent church—considered the peculiar privilege of the aristocracy—to the humble merchant family of Ramirez.

The house in which she was born was like others of its day. It had a facade, gloomy and gray, irregularly studded with narrow slits which served for defense as well as to admit the light; the gateway with its circular arch and course of deeply carven stones—a gaping hole in the sunlit walls; the heavy doors were clamped with nails worked by the medieval iron-smith, who wrought metals like wax into delicate cinque foils and rosettes full of grace and elegance. The traveller, on arriving, passed at once without dismounting, from the brilliant sunlight into the dusky obscurity of the zaguan or carved entrance, the walls of which were full of iron rings to which horses were tethered. On one side were the stables, partly underground for the sake of coolness. Here, too, was the principal entrance of ceremony to the house: the great, stone staircase with its heavy balustrade of hewn granite, which seemed built on purpose to echo the clash of armor and the ring of swords. Below it stood the mounting-block. An inner door opened into the patio or courtyard around

which the house was built. On these interiors, full of intimate charm, the medieval workman exhausted all his art. Around both stories ran open galleries, whose colonnades of Gothic arches were supported by slender columns with delicately wrought capitals on which were repeated the arms of the house. The ground floor was occupied by the kitchen, offices and servants' dwellings. The rooms above were occupied by the family. The projecting eaves of the roof, which rested on wooden soffits most quaintly carven, submerged the upper gallery in shadowy obscurity, whilst flowering vines clung limpet-like to pillars and walls. Here it was that the delicate, invalid mother of Teresa, spent most of her time embroidering tapestries, perhaps, when not reading those fascinating tales of Knight-errantry which charmed her so much; whilst curly-haired, dark-eyed Teresa played about the courtyard below, or watched the servants drawing water from the big well,—a conspicuous object in the center of the patio—with its characteristic brim, buckets, and chains.

In the interior of the house there reigned an almost solemn tranquillity, it was so austere, dignified and reposeful. According to the taste of the age there was no attempt at ornament, because all was art in its purest

manifestation of unconsciousness. The ceiling was low and sombre, the intersections of the heavy beams of resinous pine forming deeply recessed panels, carven and inlaid with delicate traceries of ivory by the Moorish carpenters of Avila; the walls were hung with heavy tapestries of lovely Cordoban leather. As in all southern climates, the house was scantily furnished; the family belongings being stored away in wooden chests, clamped with iron, which were placed against the walls and used as benches. There were a few great leathern chairs; a statue of Our Lady or of a saint, occupied a niche of the wall below which silver lamps flickered and garlands of flowers hung—where Teresa's childish fingers often placed them, having been instructed in their weaving by her pious mother.

The patriarchal and feudal authority combined, of the husband, the father, and the master, gave the head of the family an unlimited and unquestioned right to control the destinies of those who composed its household. Wife, children, servants and retainers, were bound together by common love and reverence for the head whose interests and theirs were identical.

Alonzo de Cepedo was a dignified, honorable, kindly gentleman, full of noble and

tender instincts. He had great charity for the poor and pity for the sick; sympathy for his servants so great he could never be induced to own slaves; treating one of his brother's, who happened to be in his house, as one of his own children saying: "I could not, from very pity, bear to see a person deprived of his freedom." He was of great truthfulness, and was never heard to swear or speak ill of anyone. His mind and life was of untarnished purity.

Teresa's mother was much younger than he, and singularly beautiful; a gentle, delicate woman, afflicted with much sickness, though the mother of nine children: seven boys and two girls, Teresa being the third child and oldest girl of the second family. Beatriz y Ahumada was but thirty-three years old when she died.

Of the seven boys six became soldiers and sought their fortunes in the New World; two, only, returning to their native land. One son became a monk.

Teresa's favorite brother was Rodrigo, four years older than herself, with whom she read the black-letter lives of the Saints and martyrs; and whom she induced to run away with her to the Moors and martyrdom, at the age of six or seven, begging their way. Prac-

tical Teresa, however, did not fail to carry with them provisions for the journey; not a long one, by the way, as the Moorish quarters were not very far distant from her father's house.

As they trudged down the narrow, precipitous street which led to the high-pitched bridge at the entrance to the town, they were met by an uncle on horseback, who nipped their plan in the bud, by carrying them back to their distracted mother, who dreaded that they had fallen into one of the wells of the house and were drowned. Rodrigo, man-fashion, blamed his defection on the woman saying: "Teresita made me do it." Potent augury as to the future leader and ruler of the Carmelite Reform.

Chapter III

GIRLHOOD

The monastic life, naturally, cast its spell over Teresa's imagination, as monasteries were so numerous, and her favorite game was to play being a nun and to imitate the life of a Community. She kept Rodrigo and herself busy in the garden building monasteries out of stones and mud which often tumbled down, but which she never failed to re-build no matter how frequently they collapsed. She says of herself in those days: "I gave in alms what I could—and that was very little. I tried to be alone to say my prayers, which were very many; above all the rosary, to which my mother had a great devotion, with which she inspired us also . . . I was not disposed to murmur or to speak ill of others; nor does it seem to me, I could dislike another, nor was I covetous, nor do I ever remember to have felt envy." All of which was due to the excellent Christian training of her good father and mother, the latter of whom died when

Teresa was twelve—it being a great shock; the first of her life.

She fled to the same little chapel near the bridge where she knelt on her childish way to martyrdom, and there with many tears, she implored Our Lady to be her mother.

Maria, her step-sister, now became head of the household; and it may be because of the disparity in their ages, and that she was engrossed by her courtship with Martin Guzman y Barrientos, whom she married soon after, that there was so little in common between the unimaginative but excellent woman, and her quick-witted, castle-building younger sister, who was left to her own resources.

Romantic tales of Knight-errantry abounded, and Teresa revelled in them, unknown to her father, who disliked them much. She had imbibed this taste from her mother, who had spent much time reading them aloud in order to beguile the tedium of an invalid's days or, perhaps, to keep the children out of mischief.

The main features of the literature then so popular with all classes of society, were not only a certain delicate flavor of idealism, but an unrestrained licentiousness of thought, together with a coarseness and brutality of expression only to be realized by one who has

read them. It is not difficult to imagine the influence on Teresa's fervid imagination and inexperience. The Lives of the Saints were now forgotten, or superseded rather, by these new heroes of her delighted fancy. No wonder that in after days she deplored bitterly the time wasted and the mental absorption in them, which drew her so perilously near the borders of sin.

Teresa was now approaching maidenhood and already gave indication of that singular beauty which she still possessed, even as an old woman worn by fasting and mortification. She was above medium height and well-proportioned; her brow, fair and spacious, was encircled by an aureole of curling black hair; her eyebrows, rather straight than arched, were somewhat thick; her eyes, black and round with rather heavy lids, although not large, were well-placed and lively and so full of merriment, that, when they laughed, their laughter communicated itself irresistibly to those around her; at other times their gravity imposed silence and respect. Her mouth was neither large nor small but well-shaped. Her teeth were good and her chin sweet and dimpled. Her hands were beautiful with the long, tapering fingers and filbert-shaped nails of the idealist. At sixty her walk was still

so graceful that all eyes followed her with admiration.

Her manners possessed an indescribable fascination which charmed all who came within the circle of their influence, and over whom she rarely failed to wield that power which was such a potent instrument in the reform of the Carmelites.

Teresa y Ahumada in the first flush of her maidenhood, awakening to the consciousness of her own beauty and attractiveness, endeavored to enhance them by all means in her power. "I began to wear fine clothes," she writes, "and to wish to please by looking well; and to bestow much care on my hands and hair, and to use perfumes and every other vanity I could procure; and was very curious." What she calls "curiousness" or neatness lasted to the end of her life.

These girlish weaknesses, so natural and allowable to one in the first dawn of youth and beauty, already concealed a strong character and a sharply defined, accentuated personality. To a substratum of honesty and straightforwardness, which made concealment, to her, an intolerable and guilty burden—was added all the punctilious dignity of the Castilian, which she would more willingly face death than imperil. She had a blind devotion to points of

honor, and could not bear anything that seemed like humiliation or tended to lessen her in the esteem and consideration of others, as she would fain excel in all she undertook. At this momentous period of her life, this deference to the world's opinion and dread of criticism—which all her future efforts endeavored to root out fibre by fibre—proved her truest safeguard.

The only men allowed to cross the austere threshold of Alonzo y Cepeda's house were some gay, young cousins, about Teresa's age, or a little older. She was now about fourteen. Like herself they were just awakening to the vanities of life and brought with them all the perfume of laughing and careless youth. The girl, full of fun and laughter, brought up in almost ascetic seclusion, eagerly welcomed this diversion and entered heart and soul into their schemes and confidences. "We were always together," she says, "and they were very fond of me, and I kept up the talk in everything in which they were interested, and they told me of their love affairs and childish folly, in no way good; and what was worse, my soul began to be accustomed to what was the cause of all its hurt."

She was encouraged in all these things by a relative whom her mother, whilst alive, had

endeavored to discourage coming to the house, but without success. "So many were the reasons she had for coming," says Teresa who, gay young girl that she was, began to be fond of her society, "because she helped me carry on all the amusements I loved and even suggested others to me, and imparted to me her own taste for conversation and vanities."

This intimacy aroused the father's and sister's anxieties since they saw the change wrought in Teresa's manner and way of thinking. From a devout young girl given to prayer and reflection beyond her years, they now saw her changed into a gay butterfly intent only on sipping whatever delight there was from the flowers and brightness of the sunlit world of pleasure—which her cousins' dangerous companionship conjured to her fancy.

To the end of her life she never ceased regretting this period of frivolity which, though it lasted but three months, was fraught with spiritual dangers from which God's grace alone delivered her in safety.

Blinded by the dazzling seduction of pleasure—as painted by her frivolous and vain relative whose influence controlled her so strongly—aided by the servants, she was led into escapades such as might have sullied her

honor, if God's care of his future saint did not rescue her from it by her father's resolve to place her in a convent, where her cousins' presence would not be permitted. As a shield from the suspicious comments of kinsfolk and townspeople, the marriage of her sister gave ample pretext for this step, as one of ordinary prudence, it not being considered proper that a motherless young girl should be left without a Chaperone. At this resolve Teresa was plunged into grief and almost rebellion, her repugnance to monastery life was so great.

Chapter IV

VOCATION

Whatever the romance whose glamour had enthralled her, it could have been but a girlish fancy with a rude awakening; for, in the sunlit cloisters of Santa Maria di Gracia, she soon recovered her spiritual poise, and in less than a week feels happier than in her father's house. Her better nature re-asserted its sway, and under the wise guardianship of Sor Maria Bricena, she is once more the serious-minded Teresa, whom the thought of death and eternity terrified into aspirations for higher things. She was just an ardent, impressionable girl with all the qualities for the making of a saint, but with sainthood far ahead of her. She was but turned sixteen when she became a very unwilling inmate of the Augustinian Convent of Santa Maria, and here she remained for a year and a half, drinking deeply of the waters of grace and suffering much from physical ills.

She had entered full of aversion to the religious life; but it gradually dawned upon her

mind that it might be her own vocation to be a nun, although she felt no attraction to that state. "I asked them all to commend me to God that He might give me the state in which I was to serve Him; but, still, I wished it might not be a nun, and that God might be pleased not to give it to me; although I also feared matrimony," is what she says of this time. A severe illness, the first of many which were to chasten her spirit and afflict her for a lifetime,—it being one of the most powerful of the Divine instruments which formed her into sainthood,—forced her to return to her father's house.

She entered the doors of Santa Maria with utmost repugnance; she left them with extreme regret. Here she had found peace from an accusing conscience, security from temptation, the tranquil joy of a heart at rest; and now she must go back to the place of danger, to the evil influences which had swayed her so strongly! Would it not be better to remain where she was and become a religious? But in her present state of health she would not be accepted, so she leaves the good nuns reluctantly, fearful of the future; while they part from her with deeper feelings than her own, seeing the nobility of her character and her attractive qualities of mind and heart.

The convent was near her father's house, close to its postern gate, in fact, so the separation could not have been so great a privation for him as one might imagine, since he could see his favorite Teresa as often as he desired and pet her to his heart's content. Still, to have her within his own doors again, especially now that she was so ill, was a great satisfaction.

When she was convalescent he thought it wise to send her on a visit to her married sister, the wife of Guzman y Barrientos, who lived at Castelanos, about two days' distant from Avila. Here she would be safe from old time influences—which, perhaps, were exerting themselves again,—and also enjoy a sister's care, so necessary to complete recovery.

Halfway between Castelanos and Avila is Hortigosa; a little hamlet of some forty houses, where a brother of her father, Pedro y Cepeda, lived in rural state.

The road to Hortigosa is singularly beautiful, the ascent of the mountains commencing directly as one leaves Avila. From the summit of wild moorland the traveller instinctively turns back to take a last look at the old gray city clustering around the gigantic mole of its cathedral, bathed in the soft haze of a summer's morning.

The last part of the way lies through a pine forest from which one looks down upon the little church and red roofs of Hortigosa, glittering in the sunlight. One building stands alone facing the gorge, surrounded by mountain slopes, where great blocks of marble gleam whitely amethystine, through the scrub oak. This is where Teresa broke her journey, the sojourn which had such momentous influence upon her life.

The crumbling, dismantled grange with its sunlit galleries and arcaded courtyard, is still known to the villagers as the "Palace." A gray shield above the archway still bears unobliterated the lion and St. Andrew Crosses of the Cepedas.

Here Teresea rested for a few days before continuing her journey; and it was here God saw fit to turn her mind unchangeably towards the religious life against which her heart revolted so strongly.

Her uncle, a disillusioned country hidalgo, was already an ascetic at heart, whose thoughts had concentrated themselves, in this lovely solitude, on the eternal and mysterious problem of human life. The vanity of the world was his favorite theme; his favorite occupation reading books of devotion, which he asked Teresa to read aloud for him, and who

reluctantly obeyed, concealing her own distaste in order to give him pleasure; "for in this of wishing to give other people happiness, I have done my utmost, however irksome to me," she writes.

"Although the days I stayed with him were few, such was the effect of the words of God I read and heard had on my heart, and the good companionship, that I began to understand the truth of my childhood: that all was nothing; and the vanity of the world; and how quickly everything ended; and to fear if I was to die, that I would go to hell. Although my will would not subject itself to be a nun, I saw that it was the best and surest life; and so, little by little, I began to constrain myself to take it." With these thoughts fermenting in her active mind, she continued her way to Castelanos: a day's journey through wild and beautiful evergreen forests, interspersed by limpid streams, which lay between her and the wind-swept house which was her sister's home, and where she remained three months, beset by temptations. "He (the devil) suggested that I could not bear the discipline of the religious life because I was accustomed to delicate living. From this I defended myself with the sufferings borne by Christ; that it was not much that I should undergo some suf-

fering for Him; that He would help me bear it. I went through many temptations in those days," she tells us.

The thought of her girlish frivolity was flashed before her mind to discourage her; the fact of her ill health was impressed upon her with malign exaggeration. She was never very strong and lately had been subject to fainting spells. She would never be able to stand it. Then her insuperable repugnance to the religious life! Her aversion to it was only equaled by a tremendous fear of hell. "But," reasoned this girl of seventeen, "I have well merited hell, and the sufferings of a nun's life cannot be greater than those of Purgatory. It is not much," she argued, "if I pass my life, as it were, in Purgatory, if I go straight to Heaven; for this was my desire; and in this movement to enter this life (the Convent) it appears to me I was moved more by servile fear than by love." Of course she was! God permitted her repugnance and temptations for the comfort of many other souls subjected to like trials.

Teresa was ever honest. She despised and disliked shams of any kind, and what she writes of herself was written many years after in the purified days of enlightened vision—when she wrote through obedience for the eyes

of her confessor alone. What she says is said with the calm, analytic spirit of a scientist seeking causes for effects. When she says she was weak—she knew she *was!* There is no false humility about the saints. True humility is only won through a knowledge of our own shortcomings, and Teresa, wavering between the attractions of grace and the temptations of the Evil One, was fully convinced of the facts which he so craftily brought to her mind; yet, through her good Angel's suggestions she was enabled to defeat his purpose.

After three months the battle ended, and at her return to her own house she broke her news to her father, and well nigh broke his heart, also, for she was the very core of it.

Pious as Alonzo y Cepeda surely was, generous benefactor of monasteries and convents, and admirer of nuns, yet, when it came to giving up his darling Teresa, he would have none of it! No, indeed: she was too young. She must wait. After he was dead, well, then she might do as she liked, but now she must put it out of her head. He would never consent. And Teresa? She listened quietly with a great pain at her heart—that affectionate heart so willing always to give others pleasure, so loath to inflict hurt—and then turned silently away, to carry into effect the resolution she

had taken; for she slipped secretly away in the twilight of All Souls Day, 1533, and entered the Convent of the Encarnacion. "I was so scrupulous that, when once I had said a thing, nothing would make me turn back," is what she says of herself at this juncture.

She had won her brother Antonio, who accompanied her, to take the same resolution as herself; and, after leaving her at the gates of the Convent, he was to retrace his steps alone to seek admittance to the Dominican Monastery of St. Thomas.

"I do not think when I die, the wrench will be greater than when I left my father's house; for it seems to me that every bone was wrenched asunder; and, as there was no love of God to take the place of the love of father and kinsmen, the struggle was so great that, if the Lord had not helped me, my own resolution would not have been enough to carry me through," she writes. The resolute strength of her character is clearly manifest in this decisive step of her life. Without a single mark of vocation to oil the wheels of action—with only a servile fear of hell as an incentive, she commits herself to a life for which she feels the utmost repugnance—just because she had pledged her word to the Lord, and to turn back would have been dishonor-

able. That Castilian sense of honor would remain untarnished to the end of her days—whether pledged to a peasant or a king. The reason she had chosen the Carmelite Convent, rather than that of Santa Maria di Gracia, was that the virtues and discipline which she had seen practiced in the latter had dismayed her weakness, which she felt was unable to emulate such austerity and regularity. The Carmelite Monastery was much less rigid in those points; the mitigation of those days requiring little of the inmates beyond wearing the habit and the observance of a very easy rule. Teresa,—well acquainted with its light exactions, its many privileges, its social spirit which permitted frequent visits and pleasant intercourse,—selected it as most in harmony with her own instincts and lack of mortification. Besides, she had a dear friend there, Juana Suarez, whose companionship would be a pleasure. So it was that God drew His future saint into the order she was to reform many years thereafter. Truly can it be said: "The ways of the Lord are unsearchable."

Chapter V

THE NOVICE

As said before, the Convent of the Encarnacion was about a mile and a half beyond the city walls, and before it was purchased by the Carmelites had been the country house of an old and noble family. Despite the remodelling and repairs of more than a year the entire edifice was so miserable, the church and choir so bare and ill repaired that the office books of the kneeling nuns were covered with snow that sifted through the roof in winter, whilst the fierce heat which poured through its chinks in summer was almost unbearable. Although its poverty was extreme, the community grew in power and numbers, until it rivalled the Bernardines in the preference of the noblest maidens of Avila. Centuries of warfare had impoverished every noble family of Spain, leaving their daughters dowerless, which precluded marriage and left them to seek subsistence in monasteries which were themselves impoverished through lack of

money; being supported solely by the small dowers of their noble but poverty-stricken inmates.

As soon as the convent doors clanged behind her, Teresa experienced a wonderful reaction from previous strain. A great contentment that she had chosen the better part; an ineffable tenderness that banished former aridity, filled her with delight. As she swept the convent corridors she was thrilled with a mysterious joy which came she knew not whence. Spiritual sweetness flooded her soul and she sought to be alone where she might enjoy the delights which tears alone could express. But amidst all the meekness and humility of the newly-fledged novice, who gathered up the nuns' cloaks in the choir and restored them to their places, and lighted the sisters through the dark and draughty corridors by means of a torch, there yet lingered a strong spice of dignity and true Castilian punctilio,—a respect for "points of honor" or precedence—that last infirmity of a noble nature, which it took her long years to totally vanquish. Her tears and love of solitude were misinterpreted as signs of discontent. She was often blamed when blameless; "which I bore with great pain and imperfection," she confesses. "I was fond of religious observ-

ances, but not of those which seemed to bring contempt. I delighted in being well thought of and was neat in all I did. Everything seemed to me a virtue." But she did not enjoy having her dignity wounded! A certain daintiness remained with her through life: a Bishop in after years protesting against the perfumed lavabos which he used during Mass, as an abuse. Teresa wittily excused her nuns from the imputation of a too scrupulous neatness and refinement by alleging that it was an imperfection they had copied from herself. She perfumed the linen used in the service of the altar, deeming nothing too sweet for the presence of the Divine Guest.

She speaks of the little acts of mortification and meekness which she practiced in her novice days as "little straws" with which she plenished the fire of Divine Love, now beginning to burn so brightly in her heart. But beside these "little straws" which she threw on the sparks of the Divine fire, the unconscious heroism of her nature manifested itself by the bedside of a dying nun, whom she nursed through a terrible and loathsome malady, when her companions shrank away in disgust. By the side of the sick nun she prays for patience, at the price of any infirmity and suffering.

On the 3rd of November, 1534, a year after entering, she made her profession in spite of a terrible struggle with the flesh and the devil, comparable only to that which battled in her heart when she walked down to the convent seeking refuge from her doubts and wavering in the shelter of the cloister. Still she made her vows, as she herself confides, "with great resolution and happiness." The year following, her health gave way. Her prayers for afflictions and suffering in order to gain virtue had been answered. The sparse nourishment and privations of impoverished monastic life, had told upon a frame already delicate and sensitive. The fainting spells, to which she had been subject while at Santa Maria de Gracia, returned to be more frequent and prolonged, and were complicated with severe pains of the heart. For long periods she lay in a state of unconsciousness, painful to witness. In this condition, in the Autumn of 1535, accompanied by her faithful friend Juana Suarez, she returned once more to her father's house, where she could have the care and attention which the poverty of the Encarnacion could not afford her.

The doctors of Avila (medical science was then barely out of its infancy in Spain), powerless to give relief, but unwilling to ac-

knowledge their incapacity, shook their heads and pocketed their fees. The anxious father resolved to try other remedies which perhaps commended themselves as more efficacious (and they could hardly be less so) decided on taking her to Becedos, famous for the cures worked by its Curandera, or healing woman. As the cure was not to take place until the following year, she was again taken to her sister Maria at Castelanos; breaking the journey, as before, at the home of her uncle Pedro at Hortigosa. As we are only sketching the character of Teresa, we pass over the spiritual experiences which she passed through in this interval of waiting, and which so strongly influenced her after life. Our business is with her natural character, so rarely spoken of, yet so utterly charming and attractively interesting.

As to the visions and locutions which took place here, of which she tells, and which some writers have attributed to hysteria—the calm manner in which she relates them, the subtle and penetrating distinctions with which she classifies them, relegating each to its special sphere; the complete control she possesses over both her feelings and her mode of expressing them, are as far removed from this charge as any writings that were ever penned. No

one born was less hysterical than Teresa. Her life was calm, orderly, full of discipline; her actions free from precipitation and haste; her mind clear, shrewd and sharp; and this same clearness, shrewdness, sharpness, is as discernible in her relation of a vision as in her narrative of the foundation of a convent. One curious characteristic of her visions is that she analyses and describes them with the calm penetration and clear judgment of an observer chronicling events to which he is a stranger,—or which, if not, would seem to have taken place in some other sphere—than in the fervid and broken phrase of a person who has actually experienced them. Teresa is nothing if not honest and sincere.

During the nine months which she spent in the solitude of her sister's house at Castelanos, her time was spent in reading good books, when she was not racked by the torturing pains of her mysterious illness, which was, indeed, a martyrdom. She relates how much her soul was benefited by this period of tranquil contemplation—removed, as she was, far from the disturbing influences which so troubled her spiritual life at Avila. She drank deep draughts of Divine Grace, and was so inebriated thereby that she became dead, as it were, to all earthly attractions; feeling nothing

but a wondering pity for souls that could find in them any pleasurable interest. Her very pains became a species of delight since they were something she bore to prove her love for God, who permitted them.

In the Springtime she was taken to Becedos where she underwent the awful ministrations of the "Cure Woman." As she was subjected to the treatment during three months, it will be interesting to know what it entailed. The same methods of cure are still resorted to in some districts of Spain, some of the medicines being as weird and unhallowed as the 'witches caldron' of Macbeth,—at least those brewed by the Saludador; if these fail, then the Curandera by sheer brute force stretches and pulls the sufferer's limbs until the bones crack in the sockets and his frame is left bruised and sore and stiff. Such was the regime to which Teresa was subjected, the "Cure Woman" exhausting all her barbarous remedies, leaving her almost lifeless. The treatment had resulted, as might be expected, in the complete prostration of the sufferer. "I know not how I was able to bear them," she says; "And, indeed, although I bore them, my constitution could not." Small wonder, as she remarks drily that "by force of remedies" her life became almost extinct. "With this gain,"

she adds ironically, she returned to her father's house, accompanied by him and her faithful Juana. At Avila, the doctors despaired of her and she was pronounced in consumption. After three more months of intense suffering, she fell into the trance which lasted three days and well nigh caused her to be buried alive. Extreme Unction had been administered; prayers for the dying had been said. Nuns from the Encarnacion were sent to watch over the body of their sister and bear it to the grave—kept open day and night to receive it. The friars of Avila chanted the office of the dead for her soul. The tenacity of her father, alone, kept her from being buried alive. "This, my daughter," said he, "is not yet for the grave."

When she returned to life her eyes were full of wax which had guttered from the candles around what had seemed a corpse!

It was during this trance that she had the vision of Hell, which so terrified her that her first act on recovering consciousness, was to ask for a priest to whom she confessed her sins, whilst her tears fell thick and fast.

Her condition was pitiful: her tongue bitten to pieces; her throat so weak as to be unable to swallow anything but water; her body, as if it had been violently wrenched limb from

limb; her senses wavering; her nerves shrunken with pain into a coil-like rope; her body like a corpse, unable to move hand or foot with the exception of one finger of her right hand. She could not bear to be touched and was moved on a sheet.

On Palm Sunday, at her urgent desire, she was taken back to the monastery. She, whom they expected dead, they received with life; but the body was worse than dead and pitiful to look upon. She says: "I cannot describe the extremity of my weakness, for only my bones were left." It was three years before she was able to return to active life. When she was able to crawl about on all fours, she gave thanks to God for the privilege.

Chapter VI

MONASTERY DAYS

Teresa was about twenty-two years of age when she, more dead than alive, was taken back to the Encarnacion, where twenty-five years of her life were destined to be spent in alternately rising and falling: either lifted to sublime heights of prayer or dropping back into old-time faults, through weakness and temptation.

We may roughly classify this period into distinct epochs: the time her illness lasted, eight months in its acute stage when she became able to crawl about on all fours; three years before being able to return to active life; the interval between her recovery and final conversion, extending over eighteen years; and a third term, in which she laid the outward and visible foundations of that sanctity, without which it would have been impossible for her to found her monasteries.

During the three years in which she lay paralysed and helpless in the convent infirm-

ary, alone with her books and prayer—the servile fear, of which she speaks as controlling her formerly, gave place to love. She had risen high in the esteem of the good-natured nuns who were filled with wonder at her resignation, cheerfulness and edifying discourse, and her resolute discouragement of gossip. "For I never forgot that I must not say of others what I should not like to have said of myself; and so persuaded of this were those about me that it became a habit with them. It came to be understood that where I was other people's reputations were safe, and also with those who were my friends and associates." This freedom from uncharitable comment is one of the intimate traits of the Castilian Saint, and in itself may explain the love and respect she never failed to inspire.

Despairing, at last, of earthly cure, she betook herself to heavenly physicians and asked St. Joseph to heal her; and "who acted like himself," she says, "in enabling me to rise and walk about, ridding me of the paralysis." Ever after she attributed to his intercession all her successes and triumphs.

In spite, however, of her restoration to health she never quite regained her strength, although she found a substitute for it in her tenacious will and nervous energy. To the end

of her life she was subject to constantly recurring attacks of illness, whilst for more than twenty years after her recovery she could take no food until after mid-day because of violent nausea. We now enter upon a time of struggle, with grace beckoning and urging, and nature resisting and rebelling, for Teresa did not leap into sanctity; she only approached it when she had sounded all the imperfections and all the pitfalls of poor humanity; when she had learnt by her own backslidings to be pitiful to those of others; when she had fought and wept and almost despaired for eighteen years, and youth had been consumed in attempt and failure. Not until after eighteen years of painful and valiant effort, did she attain that eminence glowing with the serene light of evening, whence she gazed for the first time with tranquil eyes, over the desert she had traversed, and the long and tortuous road which she had travelled. "I passed a most troublous life," she says, "for prayer only made me realize my faults the more. God called me on one side; on the other I followed the world. Everything of God gave me happiness; the things of the world held me in bondage. It seemed I wished to reconcile these two opposites, so inimical to each other as are the spiritual life, its contentments and satisfac-

tions, and sensual amusements. Prayer was a great labor to me, for the spirit was rather slave than master; and so I was not able to shut myself up in my heart,—which was the only way of proceeding I used in prayer,—without shutting up at the same time a thousand vanities. When I saw how little I improved, the many tears with which I bewailed my faults filled me with great anger, for neither resolution nor effort sufficed to keep me from falling when occasion for sin was there; they seemed to me deceitful tears and only served to make my sin appear the greater, because I saw how great a mercy the Lord did me in granting them with such deep repentance."

The cause of all these falls was the custom which permitted the Convent parlors to be open to all comers, and consequently were thronged with visitors. Noble ladies and gay young gallants of the town, called to visit relatives and friends, and retail the gossip of Avila. The nuns conversed with them freely. Teresa knew them all, had played with them from childhood. The lively young nun, marvellously witty and shrewd of tongue, more interesting than ever since her miraculous recovery, was the centre of attraction. Friendships were formed or renewed at the convent

lattice that became absorbingly pleasant and, in time, dangerously so,—as her illness had allowed her as much or more liberty than the oldest nun in the monastery. In consequence, prayers grew chillier; it was enough that she took part in the vocal orisons; at last, mental prayer was given up. "It appeared to me best to do as so many did," she confesses, "although I was the worst of them all, and to pray those vocal prayers that were obligatory, rather than to seek communion with God, when I deserved to be with devils and was deceiving those around me." Thus, as these intimacies grew upon her and rooted themselves in her life, that other life, which had dawned on her in illness, vanished below the horizon. Agitated and dismayed, she wavered and floated between duty and inclination,—she knew no rest. It went so far that a nun, a relative of her own, who had grown old in the cloister, angered her with repeated warnings. "It seemed to me she was scandalized without any reason," she writes.

The keenest reproach of conscience was the thought that she was deceiving her good old father, which became intolerable to her. During her illness, while under the sway of grace, she had endeavored to guide him towards prayer. Now, she practices it no longer, and

the good old man knew it not; however, help was at hand. Her father was taken ill and "sicker in soul than he in body," she once more left the convent to nurse him in his last hours, and to repay, in some measure, the tender devotion he had lavished upon her in like circumstances. His sufferings were intense but, although her heart was rent asunder at the thought that in losing him she was losing all that made life precious—she repressed every sign of grief or discomposure that might have disturbed his last moments. When his paroxysms of pain were most terrible she comforted him by the thoughts of what Christ had endured for his sake. No further moan escaped the brave old Knight, who only wished he might have been a monk in one of the strictest orders. After three days unconsciousness he rallied and then died, repeating the Credo. "His face seemed like an angel," she tells us, "as indeed he was in soul and disposition."

At the death bed of Alonzo y Cepeda, soothing his last moments, was his confessor, Vicente de Barrone, a Dominican Monk. To him, in those dark hours, Teresa laid bare her soul. He pointed out where she had gone astray by abandoning mental prayer; bade her return to it, and to communicate at least every

fortnight. From that time to the end of her active, troublous life, she never desisted therefrom; and ever found therein her refuge and pillar of defence.

It must be remembered that it was not until 1555, when she was forty, that Teresa began, in earnest, to wean herself from the occasions of sin,—those fascinating hours spent in the locutorio—and then, not entirely; and that she did not attain to the continuous pain of love, in which her soul burnt itself in sacrifice, until towards the year of 1565, when she was fifty.

Think of this often, ye struggling souls, endeavoring to climb the rugged path of prayer and perfection!

For Teresa, the climb was long and painful; her soul parched with thirst, her heart torn by her own imperfections, the strain almost unendurable; before she reached the summit of the cross-crowned heights, to sink down at the base of the crucifix and survey, amazed and terror-stricken, the difficulties whereby she had ascended.

Chapter VII

THE REFORMER

After her father's death, Teresa, following the advice of good Father de Barrone, resumed her "method of prayer," which was the simple one of shutting herself up in her heart, in order to converse familiarly with the Lord; using her own words instead of the set form of vocal prayer then in vogue; as in Teresa's day, mental prayer was little practiced; vocal prayers and chanting of the Office, being the only method then in use in monasteries. Ignatius of Loyola, by the inspiration of God, had resuscitated meditation at Manresa; but outside of the "Little Company of Jesus," it was practically unknown; as the followers of Ignatius were not widely dispersed, and their influence was but in its infancy at this time.

Teresa, also led by the spirit of God, was inspired to "shut herself up in her heart" where she allowed her imagery full sway; imagining her soul as a garden which she

sought to make bloom with flowers for the visits of the Master. The garden was untilled, therefore she set herself at work clearing away the stones and weeds of neglect and carelessness,—which were her faults and imperfections—and rooting out of its soil the growths of sin. Now, she must plant the seeds of virtue, and these must be nourished by the waters of prayer!

A simple method, indeed, which the innate practicability of her nature enjoyed so much that she sought to be alone often, that she might shut herself in this garden of her soul, in order to entertain her Lord whom she imaged walking therein. No wonder that her simplicity, earnestness and generosity won Him to visit her "garden" often; regaling Himself with the perfume of the flowers her constancy had caused to blossom into rarest bloom. No wonder that she—heart-hungry for the love which no earthly affection had the power to satisfy—began to taste the ravishing sweetness of Divine Charity, which led her along the path of flowers until she fainted with ecstasy! Teresa's heart was peculiarly fitted for love as the strong affections of her life prove. Big hearts love God the most. She was intended for a great work which never would have been accomplished if her heart

had been less great; or her soul less nourished by the celestial bread of Prayer. Her visions and locutions were given to enable her to climb the rugged road of tribulation and trial marked out for her reluctant feet;—such a thorny road of suffering that, but for these heavenly visitations, she never could have endured the anguish and the pain.

During these intimate visits of the Lord He told her to found a monastery where Prayer would be the chief occupation of its inmates; a plan which, when known, stirred up such a tempest of opposition that all Avila was in an uproar and her own convent simply electrified with indignation.

Were there not monasteries enough? Were not the people over-burdened already by their support? What nonsense was this of Teresa y Ahumado, known to them all as one of the gayest hearted of the nuns and, but recently, one of the least inclined to solitude? Solitude indeed! Was she not forever travelling about visiting now this one, now that? And now, forsooth she was having visions and revelations and wanted to found a monastery of strict enclosure. Well—she had better practice the slight restrictions imposed by the Encarnacion's easy rule first!

It was a scheme that convulsed Avila with

laughter, bitterness and biting epigram, at the expense of the "gadabout nun." Inflated old hidalgoes, with a gravity peculiar to Spaniards, buttonholed each other in grave alarm. "Women's nonsense," they said: "A dream of empty heads; impossible scheme; attempt of ungovernable ambition. Let her get to her convent, fittest place for women!"

The nuns were very indignant that she wished to separate herself from them; her intention being a rebuke to their free and easy mode of life. Who was she, indeed, to thus pose as a reformer—she whose conduct was so much less regular than their own, being but seldom in the monastery? It would become her better to procure an increase of revenue for the monastery to which she belonged, than to be seeking support for a new one which no one thought needed but herself, and some few dreamers influenced by her."

Such were the rumors and clamors, and wild gesticulation of excited groups at the corners of sunlit streets or under the cool arcades of market-places, that one would have thought that nothing less than decimating pestilence, some signal and universal calamity had befallen the city. It was as if some wild and terror-stricken shepherd had just arrived with the news that he had seen the tents of the

Moors glittering in the August sun midst the folds of the neighboring Sierras.

Public meetings were convened to protest against the innovation, and these were almost unanimous in dissent of its furtherance. There was one champion, however, who entered the lists in Teresa's behalf; one whom Avila honored and loved as a great preacher and a holy priest: Father Ibañez, a Doctor of Divinity of the Order of St. Dominic. He alone stood up in defense of the plan; at least, temporarily, until it was tried. Cleverly, he proceeded to show up all the weak places in the reasoning of the Corregidor against the foundation. If it was to be condemned on the charge of being a novelty,—well, so had been all the Religious Orders in their day. Such, indeed, had been Christianity itself. Was the restoration of an ancient order to the primitive spirit, to which it owed its lustre in the past, to be regarded as a reprehensible innovation. Which, then, was more reprehensible,—to lose its ancient splendor or recover it? And if they were not startled by the first, why should they be scandalized by the second? "Cities," he affirmed with grave irony, "were full of good-for-nothing people; the streets swarmed with vagabonds, indolent and idle men, and wretched women abandoned to vice;

and nothing of this is looked upon as superfluous and no one seeks to change it; and yet four wretched nuns only, shut up in a corner,—in a hole—commending us to God, are held to be a serious danger to, and an intolerable burden upon the public! "How is this, Señores?" he asked with scathing satire. "What the object of this gathering? What foreign enemies threaten these walls? What fire rages through the city? What pestilence consumes it? What famine afflicts it? What ruin is imminent? Can it be that four barefooted nuns, poor, peaceable and virtuous—are the cause of so much commotion in Avila? Give me leave to say that to convoke so solemn a meeting for so slight a cause seems to me a lessening of the authority of so grave a city." Naturally, such eloquence calmed the storm of opposition.

The Reform of the Carmelites owed its existence to a few nuns and some of Teresa's relatives and intimate friends, who in her cell one night, in the frankness of familiar intercourse, fell to discussing the difficulties placed in the way of a contemplative in the overcrowded and worldly convent of the Encarnacion which sheltered 180 nuns. Among those present was Maria de Ocampo, a niece of Teresa, who was living at the monastery. It

was to a remark of this gay young girl, serious for the moment, that Teresa's first convent owes its foundation. "Well, let us who are here," she cried, "betake us to a different and more solitary way of life, like hermits." Insensibly they found themselves debating the possibilty and probable cost of a small convent, restricted to a few inmates, who might find in a stricter rule those impulses to devotion so entirely wanting in the secularized atmosphere of the Encarnacion. Maria offered to devote one thousand ducats of her own dowry. Dona Guiomar di Ulloa, a pious widow to whom Teresa soon afterward poured out the tale, promised to supply what funds were wanting. Thus it was that the great work of Teresa's life was formulated and begun. Thus it was that the magnificent Lady, Dona Teresa y Ahumada—as she was still addressed in the monastery where worldly state was recognized without change—began the work of reform which would transform her into the humble Teresa of Jesus, with whose name the whole of Spain would soon resound; and Avila, now so inimical to her plans, would, years afterward, consider itself robbed of its greatest treasure in not being able to possess her dead body.

Chapter VIII

SAN JOSÉ

When Teresa, after many trials, at last succeeded in getting into the small house dedicated to St. Joseph, where she and her companions were free to practice contemplation and prayer and seclusion, she was, indeed, happy. As yet, nothing was further from her mind than to found an Order. For nearly five years this one, poor convent, suggested by her needs and necessities, where she and others like her could fulfill the dictates of their conscience, satisfied her extremest aspirations.

The day was portioned out into work (for "if a man work not, neither shall he eat" was a favorite maxim of this practical saint) as well as other duties and prayer. They rose at six and the Office as far as None occupied them until eight in Summer and nine in Winter. Then came Mass which was only chanted on Sundays and solemn feast-days. As to the meal hour, it was left unsettled, as it depended on whether there was anything to eat; or, as Teresa expressed it: "According as to how

the Lord gives it." If there was food, at eleven in Winter, and at ten in Summer, the bell summoned them to the refectory. Their food, if they were not reduced to dry bread only, generally consisted of a little coarse fish, or bread and cheese. It was strictly forbidden to eat or drink between meals without permission. Then followed an hour of recreation, during which, amid the twirling of distaffs and the whirr of spinning wheels, they might converse as they pleased; after which came silence, while some slept the siesta and the wakeful prayed and meditated in their cells. On the stroke of two, except in Lent, Vespers was recited, followed by an hour's reading. Compline was said at six in Summer and five in Winter. At eight o'clock, Summer and Winter, the bell rang for silence, unbroken until Prime the following day. Matins was recited a little after 9 p.m., the interval being occupied in reading or prayer; after which there was Examination of Conscience and the reading of the next day's subject of meditation. At eleven they retired to rest. Teresa's rule was strongly influenced by the Jesuits who for so many years directed her life. The nun's coifs were of the coarsest flax as were the sheets; their habits were of woollen serge, and they wore the alpargatas or hemp

soled sandals still used by the Spanish peasantry.

Despite her constant illness and duties as Prioress, Teresa was foremost in every mean and humble office. Her cleanliness and conscientiousness shone so conspicuously in the kitchen that her nuns laughingly remarked that she might have been born a cook and had never performed any other duty. They never fared so well as when Teresa's turn came round to serve in the kitchen, even though she was sometimes found in an ecstasy her face wrapt and beautiful, her rigid hands grasping the frying pan. "So true was it," she wrote "that God walks even among the pots and pipkins."

No words can depict the holy joy and glad cheerfulness of heart that reigned at St. Joseph's, for Teresa would have no melancholy faces about her as she dreaded them like the plague.

Her instructions to her Prioresses in after years, are but the maxims she ever exemplified in her personal practice.

"Let the Prioress take great heed," she admonished, "that the rules and constitutions be observed in everything, but with a mother's love; for she who would be obeyed must make herself loved."

The Prioress is bidden to see that the convent is provided with suitable books; as necessary in their way for the sustenance of the soul as food for the body. "Let the sick be nursed with all love and charity; and let her be chosen infirmarian who has most ability and charity for the office. Let the sick one then endeavor to display the perfection she has acquired in health, by giving as little trouble as possible." Wise and holy Teresa!

When necessity required, she was relentless and immovable. Anxious that the atmosphere of her little world should be one of peace and charity she writes: "If it should happen that some trivial word should give rise to any dispute, let it at once be remedied; and if not, and should still continue, betake yourselves to prayer; and if anything of this nature, such as a faction, or desire to be more than others, or points of honor (she especially detested 'points of honor') should continue, let them give themselves up for lost, and know that they have cast out the Lord from amongst them. I fear that they harbor Judas. Let the Prioress, for the love of God, take great heed that it be quickly checked; and, if love should fail, great chastisement must be resorted to. Cast out this pestilence from amongst you; use any means to cut away these

branches; and if this should not answer—pluck out the root." "Try and find out the virtues of each one; love her for and profit by them, and regard not the fault you see in her" is her advice against uncharitable criticism.

As said before, Teresa had never dreamed of being a foundress,—her ambition in starting San José being the small one of personal sanctity for herself and a few others—but the virtues practiced therein quickly attracted attention. The King himself asked their prayers; and Teresa was commanded by him to found like monasteries in other cities.

To do God's will was the passion of her life; therefore when it called her at the age of fifty-two to leave the peaceful seclusion of San José and go forth into the world to fight her greatest battles, her fiat was instant and entire—though she well knew from past experience that suffering and sorrow awaited her at every step.

Chapter IX

THE FOUNDRESS

If Teresa had been merely a mystic, let her be as ardent and inspired as she liked, she would never have founded and was already doomed to failure; but she was pre-eminently a woman of action, as well as a woman of the highest spirituality. She drew from her visions and ecstasies, as from a perennial fountain, the refreshment, the energy, the courage which sustained her throughout her laborious life and was the marvel of her contemporaries; but the moment her feet touched the earth she ceased to be ecstatic. Her clear, incisive comprehension, her shrewd, practical common sense, admitted of no delusion in dealing with tangible realities. Keen sighted, astute, didactic, matter of fact,—almost prosaic—as soon as an ecstasy is over she becomes the Castilian gentlewoman: gracious, dignified, courteous, and serenely gay-hearted. She was destined to transgress every rule for saintship that had been consecrated by time and tradition; being a constant surprise to those about

her, who often failed to recognize how sanctity could be so charming and unconventional. Those who expected to see a withered ascetic, stern and gloomy browed, were amazed when they were confronted by a courteous Castilian lady, who spoke with urbanity on the topics of the day; as if, instead of convents and foundations, she had been reared in courts and movements.

Through the long years of persecution, disappointments, calumnies, misunderstandings, opposition, herculean labors and sufferings of the Reform, she ever maintained a gay serenity that never deserted her, and that was the wonder and despair of her less spiritual companions; who were oftentimes overwhelmed and disheartened by multiplied disaster and defeat of their hopes. Not so the indomitable Teresa, whose courage but waxed the stronger as opposition grew in power.

A journey, in those days, was one of very real risk and peril. Most men made their wills before entrusting themselves to the dangers of the road; and, yet, Teresa with her companions,—a parcel of weak women undaunted by privation, fatigue or the perils of the way—often undertook them: creaking along in an old cart over the danger-infested highways of Spain, or borne by donkeys along

the narrow paths of precipitous heights, where accidents were many.

Her enemies, once more, called her "a gadabout and restless woman." Gadabout and restless! So she might have been if she had gone to please herself; although one can imagine there was little pleasure to be found—except the satisfaction that comes from duty done—in panting all day in a wooden cart without springs and being jolted over leagues of medieval road under the fierce summer sun; so intense in its heat that Teresa at times became delirious. "Such is sickness," she says apologetically.

Her quaint description of the journey to Seville, whither she went at the command of obedience, and much against her will—this "gadabout woman"—is very charming. Many a journey had she taken in the antiquated carts with spokeless wooden wheels and canvas tops, which never failed to get stuck in the mud of shallow fords of turbid streams—but never had they such a dangerous crossing as that of the quick-sanded Guadalquiver en route to Seville. How her quaint narrative flashes the scene before us! The dusk of evening falling over the wide bosom of the turbulent river; the red gleam of the setting sun fading behind the gray fortress on the

hill; the bevy of shrieking women—she, perhaps, the only silent one at this moment of supreme danger—floating down the stream in the gathering gloom. The old rope of the ferry had broken and they were left at the mercy of wind and waves. When they, at last, as though by miracle—reached the opposite shore in safety, Teresa's laughter caused them to forget their terror by its gayety and mirth.

Their entrance into Cordoba was well nigh as disastrous as the river. Such excitement prevailed "that one might have thought the Holy Father himself was to make his entrance into Cordoba that day," writes Fray Julian of Avila who accompanied her. "When I saw this," says Teresa, "I tell you daughters that, although this may seem nothing to you, it was for me one of the worst moments I have ever gone through, because the excitement of the people was as great as if bulls had entered; and so I was all impatience to get out of that town. Although there was no place near to pass the festival (Whitsunday) we celebrated it under a bridge." In order to get possession of the cool shadows near the arches of the bridge it had been necessary to drive out some pigs who had taken shelter there from the fierce heat of the sun!

That Whitsunday "festival" remained eternally engraven in the memories of those whose fate it was to survive the great companion who had been the soul and life of it. Melancholy and discouragement fled before the magic presence of the little old woman shrewd of eye, witty of tongue, who, taking in at a glance the fun, the humor and the folly of it, turned their adventure into food for merry laughter—so contagious that none could resist it, and all laughed in concert. This sense of humor was a great asset in the business of founding monasteries; for it lightened the burdens and cheered the way of her companions, whom difficulties oppressed heavily, and opposition depressed and discouraged. If on the steep road, scarcely more than a bridle path, someone tumbled from a donkey to be bruised sorely but not dangerously, it was Teresa's merry laughter that caused them to forget their aches and pains and proceed smiling at the misadventure. Their experiences by night on the lonely uplands of Spain, when falls were frequent, afforded plenty of opportunity for the exercises of her ready wit and humor to enliven the situation. She was ever ready to laugh at a joke and encouraged laughter in her nuns by all means in her power, which were great;

for she was as witty as she was wise. No long faces were permitted in her monasteries as she considered them a "pest." "Make holiness attractive so that others, seeing you filled with joy, may be drawn to the service of God," is what she preached in season and out of season. "I laughed," "It makes one laugh," "I laughed heartily," are expressions plentifully found in her "Letters" and "Book of Foundations." Joy of spirit should be ever the mark of sanctity was her teaching, as that of St. Paul: "Rejoice, and again I say rejoice in the Lord!" was her constant exordium and practice.

To a narrow brain, the mirth and joy which beamed from the saint's countenance,—which spirit she imparted to all her convents—was accounted a weakness. A nun, ordered by Teresa to sing to celebrate some festivity, manifested scandalized disapproval. "Sing," she exclaimed, "at such a moment! It seems to me it would be better to contemplate!" whereat the saint, who could not endure such a spirit, bustled her off to her cell to "contemplate" on the virtue of obedience, keeping her there several days. Not less remarkable was her trust in Divine Providence. From the hot August day in 1567, when she set out from Avila in the dawn of early morning,

with only a few small coins in her pocket, to found a monastery in Medino del Campo, until she breathed forth her heroic soul fifteen years later at Alba, her confidence in God's providence was a constant marvel; for the whole course of the intervening years was such a series of trials, disappointments and tribulations, that none but a saint could have stood them. "The less money, the more heart," was a favorite saying of hers; and she went off and bought an "Ecce Homo" and a "Descent from the Cross" with the last few maravedes she had in her purse. Yet she was on her way to found a monastery! She wanted them for the Chapel. "Take possession as best you may, and then you will see what I will do," said Our Lord to her when He ordered her to found San José without money and in the face of violent opposition. To the end of her life she was compelled to follow this command, taking possession as best she could;—sometimes even in the middle of the night, whilst her opponents slept, thinking she was vanquished—to awake in the morning and find her in valiant possession of the disputed property, whence they could not dislodge her. No doubt her sense of humor was greatly tickled on these momentous occasions.

Seville is a gray town cropping out amidst

gray boulders, walled and grim. Around it waste moorland and streams, mountain peaks tipped with snow; dark and mysterious at sunset, covered with silvery haze in the light of early morning. Down in the valley the Adíja, a streak of silver, and fields of green grain, ripening in the sun, full of scarlet blots of poppies. The roads which lead to it are little more than bridle paths, frayed by donkeys and travellers; few of them accessible to carts. They follow every undulation of the soil as they link towns and villages together.

When Teresa and her companions arrived at the city where they expected to find an Archbishop eager to welcome them, they found instead, a prelate piqued and angry that they should have come at all; and who energetically declared that neither now nor at any future time would he countenance a foundation without an endowment. "He might just as well have told us not to make the monastery at all," writes the saint, as the Reform would not permit endowments; being founded in absolute poverty.

The news fell like a thunderbolt on the devoted head of the fever-stricken woman and her nuns, who thus saw the extinction of their hope which had lured them over 150 miles of hot, dusty Andalusian road!

Teresa had, however, taken possession of the small, damp and wretched house, which had been secured for them by Fray Mariano, and here they remained pending negotiations. The house was as poverty-stricken as its inmates. Some rushes to sleep on, and a few plates had been provided; but as these were borrowed they had to be returned the next day; so that all the bed they had was the bare floor, on which they lay covered by their capes. A little bread kept them from starving; as it was. "Such was their patience and love of poverty," says the chronicler, "that they were better satisfied than if they were in the tents of Ahasuerus."

At last the Bishop, touched by grace, and the thought of their poverty and patience, came to see Teresa, and was captivated, charmed and won. He gave her full permission to do what she liked, as she liked.

"Go, Father," said the unwilling Corregidor of Palencia to Fray Gracian, who had sued in vain for a license to found, "Go, and let it be done even as you desire; for the Mother Teresa of Jesus must bear some mandate from the Royal Council of God, so that, in spite of ourselves, we are all forced to do as she wishes." The good man had been stubbornly opposed to the foundation until he fell under the charm of Teresa's manner.

Men felt in her that indefinable thing which, for want of a better term, we call authority. She was her own star. Hers was neither a sanguine nor a poetic temperament; she never overstepped the limits of a dull reality; she saw it in no false light. A leader is rarely imaginative; if he is, it is not to success he marches, but to a scaffold and posthumous renown. Teresa never dreamed of the impossible and for this reason, came nearer to achieving it than most. Untiring constancy, indefatigable patience, ceaseless energy, a mind wonderfully even and serene: unelated by success, tranquil and steadfast under the greatest reverses—these are the qualities, dull and prosaic as they seem, which move the world, if, as in her case, they are associated with genius and purpose.

Chapter X

FOUNDATIONS AND JOURNEYS

When Teresa was called upon to found a monastery in a new place, she frequently sent her Friars ahead as couriers, to secure lodgings and the few necessaries required. Julian of Avila's story of the journey to Caravaca, where there was to be a foundation, is well worth recording. He was accompanied by a pious gentleman of Avila, Antonio Gaytan—who was a friend and benefactor of the Reform.

At night they entered an inn seeking lodging, but found it so crowded they decided to continue the journey as a lesser evil. "It seems to me less painful to do the remaining two leagues, said I to my companion," relates Fray Julian, "then to stop here for the night. There is only thing against it: that, as it is night and we do not know the road, we may lose ourselves; but that we can easily remedy by getting a guide here. We at once looked for a man, hired him, and set forth, as we were

bent on entering Caravaca within two hours. We were now going at a great pace, it being somewhat raining and dark, when we saw him (the guide) flounder down a precipice, and called out: 'Brother, have we lost our way?' 'Yes,' replied the man quite calmly, 'Si, Señores.' I will not repeat what we said when we heard this, and saw ourselves wandering along these impassable roads—except that my companion blamed me for it all; because, said he, as we came along I had been giving him lessons in contemplation; the fact being that I had been telling him the Commandments which were to take him to Heaven—and so he thus lost his road on earth; as those often do who travel it well. And, doubtless, the real reason was that before we started, the man had slung a big keg of wine over his shoulder and must have been so drunk that he knew not whither he was going. At last, what with this misfortune of being lost, we would have nothing more to do with him and sent him off about his business, and we were left alone, not knowing whither we were going any more than if we were blind. As we went along thus, for we had gone a long way in this fashion, we saw a shepherd's fire burning on a hill. We shouted to him to show us the way and he, to save himself the trouble of coming down,

answered 'This way, that way,' so that we soon lost ourselves again; and this time in such a fashion that we could not even make our way back to the shepherd, but began to seek about, in vain, for some shelter wherein to stop till morning. We groped about with our hands seeking some road,—go where it would, it was sure to lead us to a hamlet of some sort—and so when, at last, we found one, we hoped soon to come upon some village. We knew not whither we were going, back or forwards. We saw the form of a man, and thought we had come across some one who could direct us somewhat; and he turned out to be the very man we had dismissed, wandering about like ourselves, without knowing where. We did not feel enough pity for him to take him on with us, and so he went one way, we another; for we would not be beholden for so much as putting us on the right road, one who had guided us so ill.

"Although we were completely tired out with walking along such a road, we heard the barking of dogs, and when we had assured ourselves that we had not been mistaken, we listened to them with more attention than if it had been the best musician in the world. And so it was that, when we got to where the dogs were barking, we came upon the walls

of the village, which we had not seen before because of the darkness.

"At the first house we came to we woke up the owner from his slumbers with our shouts, to ask him the name of the place. When he answered 'Caravaca,' our souls came back again into our bodies, and we thought little of our past troubles; although we ceased not to talk about what a Cara vaca (dear cow) it had been to us. They took us into a posada (inn) where we waited for daylight, to which it wanted little."

A quaint narrative, naive and picturesque, giving an inimitable picture of the grave Castilian gentleman and the barefooted friar wandering along in the dark; the latter so engaged in pointing out the road to heaven to a drunken man, that they lost their own; a picture painted with a few masterly strokes, bridging for the moment, the chasm separating that century from our own.

When Teresa travelled in the daytime, she started out at dawn to take advantage of the cool hours of the day. Picture her on a hot August morning, leaving Avila to found a monastery in some distant city, accompanied by three or four ungainly carts, canvas covered and unwieldy, the canvas stained to all sorts of fawn and leather colored hues by

contact with varying weather. The awning is stretched over a frame-work of interlaced canes, and when tied down in front, is hermetically closed against the curious gaze of the passers-by. Canvas bags like hammocks, in which jingled pots and pans, swing beneath. The taciturn muleteers,—and when not taciturn, profane, then as now; a profanity unrestrained by the proximity of the nuns, saying their beads inside—followed on foot; their stout, knotted sticks thrust into the gay sashes worn by the Moors of Avila. Beside the cart rode Fray Julian, not unacquainted with swords and horsemanship, his long cloak fluttering behind him in the breeze. And thus shut in on every side by the sackcloth awning—the interstices carefully covered by mats of esparto grass,—with a wooden crucifix and leather water bottle hanging beside them, the nuns travelled all day long on the monotonous road towards their destination; seeing nothing of the landscape; hearing nothing but the tinkling of the bells on the mules' collars, mingled with the jingling pots and pans or the rough objurgations,—the guttural "arres" of the muleteer, whose art of driving mainly consists in rhetoric.

After one of these journeys she writes: "The same day we entered I sent for the nuns

who were to come from Medino del Campe. On the night of All Souls my companion and I were left all alone. I tell you sisters that when I remember the fear of my companion, Maria del Sacramento, a nun older than myself, a great servant of God, I am moved to laughter. The house was very large and rambling and with many garrets, and nothing could get the students out of her head; who bethought herself that they were so angry at having to leave the house, one or other of them were hidden away in it; this they could easily have done, as there was no lack of places where they might have bestowed themselves. We shut ourselves up in a room where there was some straw, which was the first thing I had provided for the foundation; since, having it, we did not want a bed. As soon as my companion saw herself shut up in that room, she seemed a little easier as to the students, although she did nothing but peer from one side to the other, still full of fear. I asked her what she was looking for since no one could enter. She said: 'Mother, I was just thinking what you would do here alone, supposing I were to die this moment!' That, indeed, seemed dreadful to me—and even filled me with dread for, although I am not afraid of dead bodies, the sight of them, even if I

am not alone, makes me faint. As this fear was increased by the tolling of the bells (as I have said it was on the night of All Souls), it was an excellent beginning for the devil to distract our minds with follies. When he sees that one fears him not he seeks other round-about ways. I said 'Sister, when that happens, it will be time enough to think about it; at present, let me sleep.' As we had had two sleepless nights, sleep soon drove away our fear. The following day other nuns arrived and we feared no more." A simple, womanly letter showing the great Teresa of Jesus to be just a human woman like the rest of us!

When they had arrived—herself and Maria del Sacramento,—the house secured for them was still occupied by a lot of roystering students whose residence it had been for some time; and who left it under protest, with angry and abusive words, when Teresa asserted her right to possession.

As said before, she had no ambition to be a foundress, and undertook the task only at the command of authority. No desire for the expansion of her order ever animated her humble soul. Her great longing was for seclusion, to flee the public eye, to converse only with angels, according to the Lord's admoni-

tion in early years; but here she was, sent forth in her latter days to found monasteries and wage battles in the hurly-burly of life, that might well have dismayed much younger energy. The will of God, alone, was the incentive for all her journeying; the only unction which eased the weariness of her tired soul, yearning for the eternal rest of heaven. Had she her own way she would have retired into the quiet cell at San José—where the noise of the world would be shut out, and its plaudits never reach her. "To die—to live," was the pathetic cry of her heart, which found in life only death. "Dying because I do not die," she plaintively sings in the midst of all the hustle and bustle of monastery founding.

Perhaps the greatest trial to her fortitude was being sent back to the Encarnacion as Prioress—in order to reform it! Not, indeed, to force upon them the rule of the Reform, but to cause that of the Mitigation to be observed. It is easy to imagine the sentiments of the nuns, when the erstwhile Teresa y Ahumado was placed over them as Prioress! The rebellion was intense and bitter—but her sweetness, humility and discretion won this battle as so many others. When the recalcitrant nuns appeared in the Choir they were

amazed to find the Statue of Our Lady occupying the stall of the Prioress, while Teresa knelt humbly beside it. Who could rebel at having Our Lady as Prioress? And so Teresa's gentleness, patience and motherly tenderness, little by little, won every heart; and the Encarnacion became a model monastery where religious regularity was observed and the world completely shut out. A gay young gallant of Avila who persisted in calling, in the face of repeated refusal, was sent to the right about by Teresa, who threatened to report him to the King if he did not cease his visits.

Chapter XI

BEFORE THE MIGHTY

During her early life at the Encarnacion, Teresa was often called upon to visit noble dames, who had heard of the witty Carmelite Mystic, and desired her presence in their hours of trouble or affliction. So frequently was this the case that it gave her critics some reason to dub her a "gadabout." In addition to this demand on the part of ladies of high degree, the nuns themselves, who frequently went abroad for the purpose of gathering revenue from friends and relatives—pleaded for her companionship so continuously, that Teresa says of herself: "I was seldom in the Monastery."

A lady of Toledo, over sixty miles away, sends for her that she may console her in time of illness—and Teresa goes and stays with her six months; her very presence restoring the invalid's health, almost at her arrival; the whole household being spiritually benefited during her sojourn. Undazzled by

the splendid halls and glittering tinsel of the life of a grandee she writes: "The greater the rank, the more cares and trials it brings, and an anxiety to keep up the dignity belonging to their condition, which does not let them live. Such is the world, now, that life—if some of it is spent in serving God—would need to be made longer to learn the new-fangled things, and modes of good breeding now in vogue. I cross myself at the sight of what goes on!" The social customs of the day, into which she was plunged, filled her with dismay. "Even in the superscriptions and addresses of letters, a university chair is needed to teach one how it must be done," she says drily.

She was a simple Castilian lady, whose old-fashioned modes of courtesy had grown somewhat musty in the shades of the Encarnacion; a woman of rare genius and powers of mind living in an invisible world of such light and beauty that earth and its glitter fall into their proper places. Nevertheless, her just appreciation of them, enabled her to treat with native dignity and the unconstraint of an equal —the great ladies who invited her to their palaces. She had learned good breeding in a school of which she need not be ashamed. Her dignity, the native courtliness and sweet-

ness of her manners, the inevitable attraction which she exercised on all who came within her influence, were more imposing than the idle formulas which, whilst despising, she was careful to comply with, in order not to give offense.

"May God deliver me from such a state (of life)" she says; "though she of whom I am speaking is one of the principal ladies of the kingdom, and I believe there are few more humble or more affable than she is; but still I have compassion for her, to see how she sometimes acts; not in conformity with her own inclination, but to comply with the rules of her state. This high state is, indeed, a slavery; and one of the greatest lies which the world tells us is when it calls such persons 'lords and ladies.' To me they seem to be nothing more than slaves a thousand times over. . . . They are so careful to act in a manner conformable to their rank, that the trouble hardly allows them time to live; for they eat out of the proper time and out of order, because everything must be done in accordance with their station, and not in regard to their health or constitution; and sometimes they must feed upon such meats as are more agreeable to their greatness than their taste. And thus I abhorred the idea of being a great

lady." Nevertheless, she had to subdue her prejudice in order to disarm opposition; to accommodate her complexion to his with whom she conversed: glad if he was glad; sad with the sad; in short, "be all things to all men in order to gain all."

A shrewd appreciation of the value of money and of powerful friends, whom she had fascinated by that majestic influence, as irresistible in old age as when she was young and beautiful, was a potent factor in her success. The worldly wisdom which forms such a strange note in her character, she turns to God's advantage not her own. No detail, however minute, which can bear upon the fortunes of her reform escapes her eye. She brings to her task a patience which has rarely been equaled, a cheerful contempt of difficulties, an intuitive knowledge of the weak points in the armor of those with whom she comes in contact.

Her experience with the Princess of Eboli affords a view of her character but little dwelt upon. This great lady was a generous benefactor of the Reform, a great admirer of Teresa, on whom she lavished benefits as freely as she exacted attentions. At the death of her husband, nothing would do her but to become a Carmelite in the monastery

founded by her generosity. Without notifying the nuns of her determination or asking their permission, she deposited herself and two maids in the cloister, demanding habits for all three immediately! She intended to have everything entirely her own way, and succeeded for a time. When knowledge of her advent reached Teresa, she was, at once, informed that the nuns would be immediately withdrawn from the monastery, if she did not either leave herself or submit to the Rules. The incensed lady seeing that she had to deal with a character impervious to flattery or cajolery, and who was adamant where the integrity of the Rule was concerned,—left in high dudgeon; becoming an active enemy, where once she had been lavish in her friendship. Because of her enmity, Teresa was obliged to withdraw the nuns from Pastraña; leaving the great dame to her wrathful reflections, which afterward resulted in much annoyance to the famous Carmelite; an annoyance that, eventually, was the means of making Teresa's holiness more clearly recognized, even by the Inquisition.

In those days there were many visionaries and ecstatics, whose abberations vexed the Church sorely, and the Inquisition was kept busy in exposing and punishing their im-

postures. Teresa's confessor had commanded her to write her whole life, for his perusal only. Some copies of the book had gotten into the hands of the Reform's benefactors, who wished to study her method of prayer. The Princess of Eboli was not to be refused the privilege of reading it also, and she had it in her possession at the time when Teresa's dictum caused the wilful lady to return to her castle, maliciously intent on reprisal, on account of the more recent exposures of religious delusion in the case of Magdalen of the Cross. The Princess felt no surer means of vengeance could be devised, than to turn the book over to the Inquisitors. As commonly happens, the malice of enemies results in the glory of the saints:—the book was approved and Teresa's fame became greater than ever.

A monastery of Teresa's Friars was also founded at Pastraña,—the fortunes of which Roy Gomez's widow could not control; and here the Friars continued to dwell in peace. It was built in a wild and strange spot high up on the mountain side, perched like an eagle's eyrie far above the clouds: in Summer, lovely with the loveliness of those deserted uplands of Spain—a tangle of dwarf arbutus and aromatic shrubs; in Winter, storm tossed,

inaccessible, its paths blocked by snow for months together.

To-day, a hare, a rabbit, starting from the perfumed tangle, alone disturbs the immense solitude where, once, the Friars dwelt. An eagle circles round the Moorish watch tower on the edge of the summit, which still sweeps the vast horizon with something of its old, stern defiance. Farther down the ridge, a mass of formless ruins show where the Carmelite monastery stood. Time, however, has spared the little hermitage which was their church; and between the bars of the wooden grating which protects the entrance, Mary, their heavenly patroness, still smiles benignantly. Once in the year, she receives the homage of the villagers from the towns and hamlets dotted around the mountain's base; and the path trodden by Moorish adalid, Christian Templar and friars, is trodden once more. Then, as night descends on the Sierras, she is left alone smiling into space, on the wind-swept heights of lofty Alta Mira.

Chapter XII

MOTHER TERESA OF JESUS

As with all really great minds, the possession of power gave Teresa no pleasure. She realised to the fullest measure the vanity of man's "little, brief authority" and, therefore, was ever conscious of the passing honors of this world and the emptiness of its adulation, —however holy the incense burner.

In her convents at the height of her fame, she was the humblest nun of them all; honestly accepting her full,—and more than full share of the drudgery; showing her daughters, not by the easy way of precept, but the thorny one of example, the dignity which underlies the basest offices when idealized by lofty motive.

Her instructions to her nuns are full of the unction of true sanctity, which is ever affable, amiable and broadminded; being, at its best, but a faint reflection of Him who was the most attractive and gentle of men.

"As far as you can, without offending God,

try to be genial and to behave in such a way with those you have to deal with, that they may take pleasure in your conversation, and may wish to imitate your life and manners, instead of being frightened and deterred from virtue. This is an important matter for nuns; the more holy they are, the more cordial they ought to be," is what she says, adding: "Although you may be pained because their conversation is not what you could wish (she is alluding to people of the world), still, never keep aloof from them, for thus you will win their love." Regarding the constraint some nuns thought necessary as befitting their calling, she lances their swelling self-esteem with a few keen-edged observations. "We think others imperfect," she says, "because they do not follow the same path as ourselves; but, perhaps, they with greater sanctity, talk with freedom and without constraint for the benefiting of others. If they maintain an innocent cheerfulness, we think it is dissipation. It is a bad frame of mind to be in, being very dangerous. It is wrong to suppose that because people are not so scrupulous as we are, that they cannot be as good as ourselves."

In regard to the desire for honor and esteem she says: "There are those who wish to be honored and respected, who see others faults

but never their own,—and yet possess defects of the very same kind; all which take their root in want of humility. If God does not favor such a character with a great deal of light and understanding, that she may improve with years,—may He prevent you from keeping her in your community; for, be assured, that she will never be at rest herself, nor leave others at peace. Our 'honor,' sisters, is to serve God: whoever would hinder this, had better be at home with her 'honor.'"

To those strong-fibred natures who were prone to belittle more delicately constructed ones, she astutely remarks: "Sometimes a trifling matter gives as much pain to one person as a heavy cross would to another. It may be that our Lord spares us these trials to give us sufferings of another kind; when, perhaps, what seems and is, indeed, a heavy cross to us, will appear but a light one to our sisters. Let us estimate ourselves by our weakest moments."

She especially warned her nuns against a very human failing: "For the love of God," she implores, "do not wish to be the favorite of your Superior! Let everyone do her duty, and, if the Prioress is not pleased with her, you may be sure that our Lord will repay her and be satisfied with her."

The small weaknesses of the Cloister she lashed with tender but unspairing satire. "Sometimes, the nuns are seized with a perfect frenzy of mortification without rhyme or reason, which lasts, so to speak, about two days; then the devil whispers that it did them harm, and that they must never again do penance; not even that imposed by the Rule—for instance silence—for they have had enough of it.

"We do not keep the things of the Rule, which cannot possibly harm us. Scarcely do we fancy that we have a headache than we leave off going to the choir, which cannot kill us. One day because our head ached, the next because it did not ache, and another three so that it may not ache; yet we are willing enough to invent mortifications out of our own head—so we do nothing. Sometimes the illness is slight and we think we are not obliged to do anything; that we do all that is expected if we only ask to be exempted. When an illness is serious no complaint is necessary; it complains of itself. I know not why she, who cannot bear any cross but a reasonable one, should be in a convent at all."

She reminds her Prioresses that "Discretion is a great thing in government"; cautioning them about commanding anything, even for the trial of a nun's obedience, which might

be to her, if she does it, even a venial sin. "A Prioress, to mortify a sister, bids her do something which, though in itself a trifle, is burdensome to the nun. When it is done, the sister is so disturbed and tempted, it would have been better if such a command had not been given. The Prioress should consider that she cannot make her perfect by a strong arm; but should rather proceed by degrees, till our Lord shall have done His work in her,—lest what is done for the purpose of advancing her should be an affliction of spirit, which is a dreadful thing. If a nun sees others doing these things she, too, by degrees will do them; and if she should not, she may be saved without this particular virtue; for without this special brand of virtue she may be a very good nun. Some there are who will endure great mortification—the greater it is, the more pleasure they take therein—because our Lord has endowed their souls with strength to give up their own will; others will not be able to endure even slight ones—and they are like a child overloaded, who breaks under the burden and falls to the ground. Labor to guide each soul by the way our Lord is guiding it. It is very important to be discreet and understand dispositions; otherwise great harm will be done instead of good."

Particular mortifications are not of obligation, and high perfection is not reached at once, but by little and little; therefore everyone should be helped onwards according to the intellectual and spiritual gifts which God has given. Prioresses should not imagine that they can read souls at once. They must leave this to God, alone, who can see into them. Nor must they impose on communities, observations and practices of their own.

Some, given to spirituality, would be glad if all were given to prayer. The Prioress must consider that our Lord leads some souls onwards by different roads; and superiors have not been appointed to guide souls by ways which they like themselves, but to direct them according to the Rule and Constitutions—even if they prefer a different way.

"I was in a monastery once," she writes, "with a Prioress for whom penance had a great attraction. She directed all the nuns along that way. At one time the whole community took the discipline, while reciting the seven Penitential Psalms with other prayers; and had other observances of the same kind. Poor, patient lambs of the Virgin!

"The same thing happens if the Prioress be given to vocal prayers. She occupies the nuns therein—though it is not the time for prayers,

even after Matins—when it would be much better if all were asleep. If, again, she is given to mortification, there is no rest anywhere. I fear for their health, and would rather they would keep to the Rule; for that gives them enough to do, and whatever is beside should be done with gentleness."

Some Prioresses think nothing of leaving out or inserting what they please in the Rule. She made a strict precept no one should do this. If a nun keeps her Rule well, it is enough.

One of the superiors added to the fast of the Church, forbidding eggs in Lent, and bread at collation. Teresa abolished this, saying: "What the Church allows and forbids, is enough without adding anything. To require more causes scruples and does harm."

Whenever she found superiors too much given to long prayers, imposing their spiritual specialties upon the nuns who groaned under the burden, she lost no time in correcting the abuse; as the spirit of innovation was particularly detested by her. The Friars, as well as the nuns, were only too ready to add to the Rule, devising new means of devotion. She tabooed this, constantly repeating her warning against "novelties," saying over and over: "What we have to do, is to keep the Constitutions—nothing more. Enough is done if they are well kept."

In this she was supported by St. John of the Cross, her 'half friar,' as she teasingly called him because of his small stature. He taught the nuns that they should not adopt the practices of the greatest saints—if not suited to their vocation; for every vocation has its own particular work and spirit; that confusion alone, and the ruin of vocations, can result from that spirit of disorder which leads one man to do the work of another, neglectful of his own. A good work, however good, ceases to be a good work for them, if it is not a good work according to their Rule. Each order has its own vocation, and every vocation has its own means to its own end.

One day Teresa, while talking to her brother, remembered that the Constitutions commanded them to separate themselves from their kindred, and she began thinking if she was infringing on the Rule, when our Lord said to her: "No, my daughter; the regulations of the Order must be in conformity with My law." Charity must never be set aside for any regulation!

In regard to prayer she said: "Do not fancy that any efforts or actions on your part will raise you to contemplation: they would only cool any devotion you already felt. With simplicity and humility, which obtain all things, just simply say: 'Thy will be done.'"

Of them who opposed her method of prayer, she humorously remarked: "Let not any one of you, who are foes to contemplation, feel sure that you run no risks yourselves, of being raised to contemplation;—if you say your vocal prayers as well as you ought, and keep a good conscience." She then adds with characteristic dryness: "I felt bound to say this; those who do not wish to know it, must not read this part."

Chapter XIII

THE CONTEMPLATIVE

Although her intention in founding San José was to resuscitate the old contemplative life of the desert, Teresa did not base the ascetic life on contemplation alone.

"There is no reason why," she writes, "because prayer is the business of every one in this house, that all should be contemplatives; and, since to be contemplative is not necessary to our salvation, nor an essential to it, do not think that any one will ever require it of you; or that lack of it will prevent you from reaching great perfection,—if there is no lack of humility. I do not believe that they who are not contemplative will be worse off in the end; but, perhaps, equal in every way those who have tasted many delights. In a measure they are more secure; for we know not if the sweetness comes from God, or is inspired by the devil. In humility, mortification, abnegation and the other virtues, there is more security; and there is no reason to fear, nor to dread lest you reach not perfection as well

as the most contemplative of all. The test of true progress does not lie in sweetness in prayer, in rapts, ecstasies, visions and such like spiritual favors,—but in humility and abasement of soul. Be not distressed, therefore, if these other devotions be denied you.

"Some think that the whole matter of prayer lies in *thinking;* and so, if they can *think* long about God, they believe, forthwith, that they are spiritual people; and if they are distracted, they fall immediately into great discomfort and look upon themselves as lost. We should be warned to beware of all ignorance in these matters.

"I am not saying that it is not a great grace from God to be always able to persevere in meditation upon His works; it is right to do it, but every imagination is not able by nature to do it; but every soul is able to love Him, and perfection lies in that, rather than in *thinking.* The good of the soul does not consist in its thinking much, but in its loving much.

"Perfection does not consist in raptures or visions, but in conformity to the will of God. Love, if perfect, is strong enough to do it, and we forget our own pleasure in order to please Him whom we love."

As to attachments she says: "Sometimes

it seems to me that I am completely detached, and, in fact, I am when it comes to the proof. At other times I find myself so attached, and that to things which, perhaps, I should have jested at the day before, that I scarcely recognise myself. At other seasons it seems to me I am full of courage, and that I would not turn my face away from anything which was for God's service,—and of this, also, there is proof that I sometimes possess it. Another day comes and I find myself so destitute of it as to be unable to kill even an ant for God's sake, if it made any resistance. So, sometimes, it seems to me that I care not what they say of me, or how they calumniate me; nay, rather, does it please me. Then come days when a mere word distresses me, and I fain would flee from the world, for everything seems to weary me. Nor am I alone in this, for I have observed it in many others; persons much better than myself; and I know that it happens to them also."

Teresa's mystical experiences are limited to the first two or three years of her convent life, and ten years or less, between the ages of forty and fifty. For the last twenty years of her life, they seem to have faded entirely away. Thus her mysticism was only the accompaniment, the under song, as it were, to

the melody of her life. Although it lends her, undoubtedly, a potent charm,—yet herein was not her greatness. Her greatness is in her life, in her valor, confidence and courage; in her boundless activity; in her supreme devotion to Duty.

In her letters we see no mystic. Sharp eyed, sometimes sharp of speech, seeing the world and its men as they are, and not as she would have them; for the world does not come forth to welcome the conqueror until he has conquered; and she conquered hers by means at hand.

Teresa was fervid with enthusiasm—without it there is little accomplished in this world of ours—but it was the enthusiasm of a calm, self-reliant, courageous nature, and it was certainly the least factor in her success.

What was it that drew Bishops and nobles and the grandees of the land to her feet, and kept them there enthralled through the course of her long life? It was not her sanctity—for that had not yet been conceded; some, indeed, hotly contending that the "gadabout" nun was but little deserving of the title of saint,—it was simply the wonderful charm of her personality, enhanced by the spiritual gifts so freely bestowed on her. To a sharp and ready wit, courtly and fascinating manners,

were added the powers of a wonderfully persuasive and eloquent tongue. These were the outward and visible means by which she intrenched herself so firmly in the affections of all, and overcame the enmity of the few. She possessed a profound knowledge of all the keys of the human heart.

The opinion of Ribera, a contemplative, and one of her own friars, is well worth recording. He says: "She had a most keen and clear judgment, a great discretion and singular prudence; a very cheerful and gentle disposition; an excellent temper and absolutely devoid of melancholy, as is well known by all that conversed with her. And what shall I say of the humility which shone in her so resplendently, that it made itself felt from a long way off?"

Teresa was humble because she had been trained in the school of humiliation. Her many weaknesses and backslidings had taught her what she was of herself, and her honest judgment forbade attributing to herself any of the victories which had been granted over nature, and the human barriers which opposed her progress in the way of founding.

Well could she say with the Great Apostle: "It is, now, not I but Christ in me," when success crowned her efforts.

The opinion of the irate Papal Nuncio may fitly be quoted as a foil to the opinion of her friends who knew and loved her. He had come to Spain prejudiced against her by enemies, and expressed himself strongly; calling her "that restless, roving, disobedient, contumacious female who, under cover of devotion invents evil doctrine; leaving the retirement of the Cloister to gadabout against the order of the Council of Trent and her superiors; teaching as if she were a master, against the teaching of St. Paul who ordered that women should not teach."

Father Juan of Jesus with warmth and energy undertook her defence, and endeavored to show what manner of woman this was whom the Nuncio so roundly abused; defending her so eloquently as to leave the Pope's representative musing and half-convinced.

Teresa's wisdom, discretion and enlightenment in governing, is seen more clearly, perhaps, in her method of reforming the recalcitrant nuns of the Encarnacion, than in any other act of her life; as here she had to win and control, not willing subjects, but those full of the liveliest animosity and rebellion.

There had always been in this convent a certain number of souls very dear to God, and these formed the nucleus of the renovation

which the new Prioress aimed at accomplishing. She would hardly allow herself to be called the Prioress, having made over this office to our Lady at the beginning, as we have seen.

It may be well to recapitulate more at length the measures of improvement which gradually, and in no very long time, transformed this large convent of 180 nuns into a community at once fervent and happy.

In the first place Teresa was in no hurry. She let things right themselves by degrees, gaining every day somewhat of greater influence by her sweetness and charity. The first thing was to gain the hearts of her subjects; and for this end she had to apply no further means than that of making herself always accessible to them, and making it a delight to be with her.

One of the religious came to Teresa and urged her to take stronger measures at once; but this she refused to do, saying that there were as many as fourteen chosen souls in the convent, for whose sake God would have spared the world the chastisement of the Flood, if they had been living at that time.

The younger nuns, in particular, were won over by the charm of the character and conversation of the new Prioress, and began to

rival one another in emulating her holy example of regular living.

In her wise course of gradual reform Teresa but imitated our Lord himself, who never hurried in the matter of training the Apostles, whom He did not overburden by observances, but did things one by one, a little at a time. He won His hearers by showing a generous sympathy with them; by kindness, patience, condescension and readiness to help them in their troubles and necessities. Teresa did the same, treating each nun according to her individual character and disposition; thus showing an accurate knowledge of human nature—in which she excelled.

Her subtle insight into character was a wonderful help in the furtherance of the Reform, as it enabled her to deal tactfully with those whose co-operation was necessary, yet always speaking truth, regardless of position, wealth or power.

No greater proof of her keen judgment of character may be had than the love and veneration for an old woman, that formed the link that bound together in a solid phalanx, subjugated by her innate greatness,—a group of individuals so opposed in character and temperament as Mariano the Impetuous, Doria the shrewd politician, Julian of Avila the in-

genuous and faithful, Gracian the gracious and courtly, and last but greatest of them all—St. John of the Cross: her "Senaaquita" (Little Seneca) and "half-friar," as she playfully called him. Each had a place in her mother's heart—and a singularly affectionate and tender heart it was—but none was so cherished as the unfortunate Gracian, first Provincial of the Reform; the son of her heart; her "Pablo" (Paul), her "Eliseo" (Elias), whose mental hurts or physical ills she grieves over, utterly forgetful of her own. To the end of her troubled life she loved him and was faithful to him, despite the rivalry and jealousy that fain would have ousted him from her affections. She recognised in him the spiritual greatness of soul which enabled him in after years, to suffer the unjust decree which expelled him from the Order, and made him an exile from his native land, and then a slave for so many years among the Moors. Always he remained faithful to Teresa, his mother-in-God; and he died softly repeating her name, with her dear image clasped close in his hand.

"She was of the sweetest disposition," he says: "so peaceful and pleasant that every one who had to deal with her, felt attracted by her and sought her company. She detested

the rude and disagreeable manners of some religious people, which make themselves and perfection hateful to others."

Despite all this attractive sweetness, which drew hearts like a magnet, she was a stern disciplinarian when culpable laxity demanded, and immovable in her judgment when occasion required; and yet, her nuns, the hourly spectators of her life—surely the keenest censors of it—feel for her an indescribable devotion.

To Father Ibañez, the Dominican, whose eloquent tongue defended her so successfully in the troublous days of founding San José, she, in after years, writes regarding a proposed subject: "Do not speak of it again, your Reverence, for the love of God, for she has got an excellent dower with which she can enter elsewhere; and not where they, being so few, must be well chosen.

"Your saying that you have only to see her to know her, amuses me. We women are not so easy to know. . . . My Father, when you wish us to serve you in these houses, send us nuns of good intelligence, and you will see we will not fall out about the dowry; but, without this, I can do nothing whatever for you."

Teresa was very fond of intelligent people.

She used to say: "A devout, good nun, if she has no brains, is of use only to herself; but I can put a sensible nun at the head of affairs, and trust her with any office." What she most valued, next to a vocation, was a good understanding. Dowry, though useful and most necessary, was ever a secondary consideration. We have seen that she could not be influenced by the wealth or position of a candidate,—even when recommended by one so highly esteemed as her friend Father Ibañez, —if she felt that more solid resources were lacking.

"God grant that those who receive unsuitable candidates may not have to suffer for it in the next world," is one of her reflections. In another place, expressing her preference for good sense rather than the superficialities of gentle breeding without it, she remarks: "Good sense, when once it sees a thing is right, clings firmly to it, convinced that this is the safest course; and although this may not lead to great spirituality, still, such a person is useful when practical advice is required, and in many other ways; and is not a burden to any one, but rather a help by her cheerfulness. I cannot see of what service a person wanting in sense can be in a community, though she may do much harm." Her experience at the

Encarnacion had taught her great wisdom in the matter of high-born nuns being prone to expect honors and to seek precedence, and she determines that such ideas shall take no root at San José.

"Be most watchful over your secret feelings," she admonishes, "especially such as concern precedence. God deliver us, for the sake of His Passion, from deliberately thinking or saying: 'I am her superior in the Order,' 'I am older than she,' 'I have done more work,' 'She is better treated than I'. What a terrible evil it is! God deliver us from a convent where this enters! I would rather it caught fire and burnt us all alive."

Teresa was, indeed, a many-sided woman!

Chapter XIV

THE END OF LABOR

Winter reigns over Avila, and filmy snow covers the Sierras with a veil of white, and masses in the narrow, tortuous streets. The wind howls with a strange and dreary moaning, bearing on its wings the secrets of vast solitudes—of the great, white world—which lay beyond the medieval town. In the country districts no one stirs; flocks and herds are under shelter, as packs of wolves scour the streets at midnight.

In Teresa's heart winter also reigned; the winter that must come to every one who has lived through the Summer and Autumn of life and seen their glories wither and die away.

Avila was no longer the Avila of her youth. The absence of the old, familiar faces which had passed out of her life forever, had left a melancholy void in her heart. It is the sad penalty of a long life to be gradually deserted by those who have accompanied it for the greater part of the way; to watch them, one by one, fall out of the race and disappear;

to be stranded, as it were, the last of a generation, amid things which have grown strange and pathetic, because of memories clinging to them. Her brothers were dead, except Pedro, the black sheep of the flock,—ever a thorn in her heart. Good old Salcedo,—generous patron and friend of San José—and loyal Father Baltasar Alvarez were both tranquilly asleep in the Lord. "And the worst of it is," she writes, "that those are left who are. The more I go, the less do I find in life wherein I can find consolation."

The year had been filled with trials, anxieties and labors. Her family had caused her much heart sorrow; some of her spiritual children had saddened her soul by unworthy jealousies and aspirations for place and honor, and a worldly prudence foreign to the spirit of Teresa; labors had taxed physical endurance to the point where supernatural aid, alone, sustained her unto final accomplishment.

The year wears to its close, to the morning and evening clang of the cathedral bells; and the gray, old streets look grayer, still, against the film of powdery snow. She writes, laughingly, to Gracian that she is 'quite a Prioress' as she fights the wolf from the doors of San José, as she did years ago from the Encarnacion.

Yet, in mid-winter, she prepares for a journey to Burgos, where she is to found the last of her monasteries; the final act in the drama of her life, and fitly called "her crown of thorns and of roses."

O, brave old woman! turn and look for the last time on Avila—the home of thy heart—before it shall fade away from thy sight forever. There lies the Encarnacion, sleeping in the hollow below the battlements; there, among the snow-covered roofs of the town are the hallowed precincts of San José, while over all, looms the great mole of the cathedral, flushed with the rose of morning. One last look, and the little caravan takes its way over the wintry world of Castile, to mingle for a moment with its white immensity, and then fade away into black dots along the skyline.

On the 2nd of January, 1582, Teresa set out for Burgos, the journey lasting several days; during which she caught a cold that developed sore throat and fever, detaining her four days at Valladolid, where she suffered a slight shock of paralysis. Despite these ills, this old woman of sixty-seven braved the inclement weather and grave dangers of the way, to reach her destination. At Palencia, she was again detained, because of illness; and the nuns tried, in vain, to induce her to remain until

the severe weather had moderated and the heavy rains subsided. A man, sent ahead to report the condition of the road, returned with the news that all the rivers were up and the bridges washed away. For a moment even Teresa was dismayed, but not for long. "Fear not," whispered the mysterious Voice, "for I will help you," and she at once started; old, and feeble and sick as she was.

After many fears and dangers safely passed over—as by miracle—the worst was yet to come: the dreaded pontoons, or floating bridges which lay between them and Burgos. At the best of times they were so narrow that a false step would have sent the unwary passenger into the river; now, they were completely submerged under half a yard of water.

At the rushing brink, the intrepid old saint turned to her nuns and said: "Now, then, my daughters, what greater privilege do you require than, if necessary, to become martyrs for the love of God? Hinder me not, for it is my desire to cross first; if I am drowned, I beseech you earnestly not to attempt it." Saying which she plunged in. She was sixty-seven, remember, suffering from sore throat and a paralytic!

She concealed a momentary fear, however, for she acknowledges that "even though the

Lord had emboldened me, I could not but be afraid" as she felt herself in the world of rushing waters. The sight of the heroic old saint, making her way safely across the submerged planks, restored courage to the trembling nuns, praying on the brink; and they, too, plunged in. Heroic daughters of a heroic mother!

Truly, the old spirit of adventure which had made Spain great,—the militant instincts of her race,—beat true and strong in her bosom, for she quaintly adds: "A bad sore throat and continuous fever did not allow me to enjoy these happenings of the road as much as usual."

When she reached the other shore, she was heard softly muttering to herself: "Lord, it seems impossible that after having consecrated my existence, and dedicated all my labors to Thee, Thou shouldst treat me thus." She, herself, tells us that the Voice answered: "Only thus do I treat my friends, Teresa!" To which she quickly responded: "For this reason hast Thou so few, Lord!"

And, then, drenched to the skin, frozen to the marrow of their bones, they enter the soaking streets of Burgos to find hospitality under the friendly roof of Catherine de Tolosa, where they dry their wringing habits before

a blazing fire. That night Teresa had giddiness of the head and spat up blood, which she attributed to her having remained before the fire longer than her wont.

The next day came the news that the Archbishop was wroth at them for coming, and refused to sanction the foundation! This, after he had himself invited them, and even urged them to come!

The old Saint was nothing daunted. She had conquered Archbishops before. She was not going to be beaten now. All was for the best. God was bound to bring His work to a triumphant ending, let the devil lay as many snares as he liked to prevent them. And so it did come to a triumphant ending—after weary waiting and much suffering—on St. Joseph's Eve; her beloved Saint coming to her aid, "just like himself" as usual.

When all was settled, and the nuns established in the new foundation, Teresa set about the arrangements for her departure: "For it seemed to me that I was no longer of any use, except to take my ease; and that elsewhere, although with more labor, I could do more good," writes the indefatigable old Saint. And then, towards the end of July, she turned her face homewards to Avila, which she never more would see on earth; for before she had

reached her native city, her great soul had winged its flight to that Eternal Home for which she had yearned so long. Not, however, until her weary heart had tasted the last bitter dregs still hidden in her cup of life. Truly, indeed, the price of sanctity is hardly won.

Chapter XV

REST AT LAST

It is an axiomatic saying, that the road of Perfection leads but one way: to Calvary and Crucifixion. Teresa had long been travelling the Way of the Cross, and in 1582 the journey ended; the summit of the Hill of Suffering was reached; it needed but the last spear thrust of pain to consummate her sacrifice.

There is no heart anguish so keen as that inflicted by one's own; those of our blood, over whom we have watched with tenderest devotion, whose welfare has been dearer than our own; for whom we have sacrificed what was essentially necessary to one's own well-being; and this bitter experience was to be Teresa's in her final days on earth.

She had ever felt a tender love for her relatives,—even a mother's love;—for Teresa's was essentially, a mother's heart: selfless, expansive, sheltering, strength giving, peace imparting. Her affection for her father was the greatest of her life; next to him came Gracian;

but her brothers and their children were very dear, not least being Maria de Bautista; a favorite niece and one of her own prioresses. These, her own,—not enemies,—were they who filled her last days with keenest heart tribulation. And not only these,—her blood relations,—but those who formed the closest ties in her spiritual family—her prioresses—all conspired to fill her cup of sorrow to the brim.

She reflects that if she had not, long ago, learnt the lesson which was the only object of life to teach, she learns it now: that man's hopes and efforts and works and all that he does and is, are but a floating quicksand, and that no faith can be placed in the children of men! "Oh, I am full of trials of a thousand shapes," she cries out in her pain, "and I am very lonely!"

Because she had not sided with her family in a lawsuit, which seemed to her unjust, they were enraged at her;—Maria de Bautista, prioress of Valladolid, sharing their indignation to such a degree, that Teresa feels obliged to leave the monastery early one morning, without even breaking her fast.

She is not entirely deserted, however, for in this hour of extreme trial, she has one faithful friend and companion: Anne of St. Bartholomew,—one of the greatest of her

daughters,—who had shared in her burdens and sympathised in her sorrows with true filial affection; and who, now, of all her children, is her sole staff and comforter.

Picture the two old nuns, feeble with age and infirmities—one with her last illness upon her—faring forth in the chill Autumn morning, upon a journey ending leagues away at Alba. Teresita, a thirteen-year old niece of Teresa's, accompanied them.

The roads are rough; the weather, perhaps, inclement; the means of conveyance the jolting carts, or shaggy donkeys, of other days. They procured bread when possible; sometimes, it is not; and more often than otherwise, they are faint with hunger. "One night," writes Anne, "we were in a poor village where we could get nothing to eat, and finding herself very weak, she said to me: 'Daughter, give me something for I am fainting'; and I had nothing to give her but a few dried figs, and she suffering with fever. I can never describe the affliction I was in then; for it seemed to me my heart was broken, and I did nothing but weep—for I saw her dying and I could do nothing to help her.

" 'Do not be afflicted for me, daughter,' she said, 'for these figs are very good; there are many families who do not get such a treat.' "

A Teresian answer truly: forgetful of her own pains to comfort others!

After much suffering and many trials, the monastery at Alba is reached at last; and a few days, thereafter, the great Teresa of Jesus gives up her soul to God; dying in the arms of faithful Anne, who tells the story.

On the 4th of October, 1582, at 9 o'clock at night, the face of the dying Saint became illumined with a great light and splendor, beautiful and radiant as the sun; and, with a last aspiration of supreme love,—so peacefully that it seemed to those around her that she was still in prayer—the soul of Teresa of Jesus took its flight. Immediately, a strange fragrance—unlike any earthly perfume—issues from the body; permeating everything about her, filling the monastery with its odor. Her books, her clothing, everything whatever, that belonged to her or that she had touched, seemed saturated with that heavenly fragrance, which did not lessen while the body lays unburied.

That same night as the nuns watched about her bed, the infirmarian, Catalina de la Concepcion, sitting close to the window of the cell which looked out upon the cloister, heard a rustle as of many footsteps; and looking out, saw a great and brilliant throng clothed

in white, which seemed to enter the cell and fill it with their presence. At the moment they reached Teresa's bed—she expired. When the light of another day broke over the little world of Alba, and gilded the pallid features of her, for whom the Eternal Day had dawned, Lo! as the watchers, blinded with tears, looked through the grating of her cell into the monastery orchard, to the amazement of all—for it was old and cankered, and the season for flowering long past—an almond tree, that grew in a little plot of ground before the window, was covered with beauteous and fragrant bloom! Meanwhile, that mystic fragrance exhales from the dead saint; a fragrance, varying not only in degree, but in nature: sometimes like lilies, at others like jasmine and violets; sometimes impossible to describe. From the Saint, as from a garden enclosed, the mysterious perfume exhales;—though the lilies and jasmine and violets of Spain had long been withered away!

According to her own laws she is speedily entombed with simple Carmelite ceremonies; her place of sepulchre, a hurriedly made vault deeply excavated in the thick wall of the chapel beneath the nun's grille. On the poor, wooden coffin, great masses of lime and stone were promiscuously piled,—in the hope that the

body might not be discovered and carried elsewhere. Despite all their rude and crude precautions, the mystic fragrance still exhaled from the hidden Saint, and would not be buried with her: clinging to the place of her interment where, nine months afterward, it led to the discovery of the body, still intact and beautiful,—though the lime had eaten away the coffin and the habit which had enshrouded it!

Nor has the fragrance of Teresa's sanctity grown less; since down through the centuries it continues to attract innumerable souls, because she was ever so sweetly, strongly human in her affections and her friendships.

Teresa of Jesus is gone; but a seat in the choir, a vacant bench at the refectory table ever await her,—in the monasteries where once she was a living presence.

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